COMPASSION

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

TEXAS NEPALESE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sanjeeb Shrestha, MD, FACG
President

It is with deep gratitude and pride that I complete my third two-year term as President of the Texas Nepalese Medical Association (TNMA). Since our inception in 2019, TNMA has steadily grown into a respected organization dedicated to serving the Nepalese and broader diaspora community in the DFW area through accessible healthcare.

A defining milestone of our journey has been the establishment of the Himalaya Health Clinic (HHC) in April 2023. This free clinic stands as a landmark achievement, offering both comprehensive medical and dental services under one roof. The facility includes four examination rooms, a dedicated dental suite, a nursing station, and a pharmacy suite. Through generous grants, we are also able to provide free flu shots and mammograms to our community. These services have been delivered despite limited medical personnel, reflecting the extraordinary commitment of our team.

The path to this success was not without challenges. We encountered significant obstacles and delays, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the search for a suitable clinic space. Yet, with resilience, adaptability, and collective determination, we overcame these hurdles and continued advancing our mission.

We are truly fortunate to have a strong group of dedicated adult and youth volunteers who serve alongside our physicians and dentists. Their tireless support ensures that the clinic operates smoothly every fortnight. As Mahatma Gandhi said:
"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

At TNMA, we strive to live this principle. Through the Himalaya Health Clinic, we not only provide essential healthcare but also discover our own purpose, forge lifelong friendships, and mentor the next generation of medical professionals.

Over the past three years, the Himalaya Health Clinic has cared for more than 3,000 patients, delivering approximately $40,000 worth of free medical and dental care each month. This remarkable impact has been sustained entirely through the generous donations of our supporters and the selfless service of our volunteers, who give their time without any expectation of return. Their compassion shines brightly as they choose to serve our community on Sunday mornings instead of resting at home.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our founding members and Executive Committee members, whose vision laid the strong foundation for today's success. I am also deeply thankful to our doctors, dentists, all our mountain donors, lifetime supporters, and every volunteer who has contributed to this noble mission.

This journey has been deeply humbling and transformative for me personally. The smiles on our patients' faces and the dedication of our volunteers will remain etched in my heart forever.

As I look to the future, I am confident that the Himalaya Health Clinic will continue to expand its services and introduce new specialties, including mental health services. Our dream is to evolve the clinic into a full-fledged community health center that addresses not only physical ailments but also the mental and emotional well-being of our community, thereby serving thousands more with compassion and excellence.

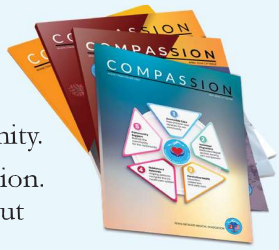
Serving as President of TNMA for the past seven years has been an honor and a privilege. I now pass the baton to the next leadership team with complete confidence. I am delighted to see our young, energetic, and capable leaders ready to steer TNMA toward even greater heights.

I wish all our members, supporters, and their families a year filled with joy, good health, happiness, peace, and prosperity. Let us continue to pray for world peace and the well-being of all humanity.

Respectfully,

Sanjeeb Shrestha, MD, FACG
President
Texas Nepalese Medical Association (TNMA) &
Himalaya Health Clinic (HHC)

EDITOR'S **Note**



Compassion in Action

Compassion… a simple word, yet one of the most powerful forces that connects humanity.

Over the years, I have come to realize that compassion is not just a feeling; it is a decision. A choice we make to show up for others, to give our time, our energy, and our heart without expecting anything in return.

When we first began this journey with the Texas Nepalese Medical Association, it was an idea rooted in service. A vision to bring people together for a healthier community. Today, that vision has taken a tangible form through the Himalaya Health Clinic, a place where compassion is not spoken, but practiced every single time.

Each clinic day tells a story:

A patient who walks in with uncertainty and leaves with reassurance.
A volunteer who gives their Sunday morning to serve others.
A doctor who chooses service over comfort.

These are not just moments; they are reflections of who we are as a community.

In this edition of Compassion, we see the true expansion of that spirit. From experienced physicians sharing their knowledge to young volunteers expressing their journeys and perspectives, it is clear that compassion is being carried forward to the next generation. This gives me immense hope.

We are witnessing something special, where service is not limited by age, profession, or background, but united by purpose.

At the same time, this journey has not been without challenges. Growth demands responsibility. Service demands consistency. And impact demands commitment. Yet, time and again, I have seen our community rise to the occasion, with resilience, with unity, and with heart.

I would like to take this moment to express my sincere gratitude to our doctors, dentists, volunteers, youth leaders, contributors, and supporters. Your dedication is the foundation of everything we are building today. Without you, this publication and this mission would not be possible.

As we move forward, let us continue to embrace compassion not just as a value, but as a way of life. Let us continue to build a community where care is accessible, voices are heard, and no one feels alone in their journey.

Because in the end, healthcare is not just about treatment, it is about humanity.

Sincerely,
Pramesh Shrestha
Editor, COMPASSION

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TREASURER'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Dipesh Bista, MD
Treasurer

Himalaya Health Clinic, a registered 501c(3) charity clinic, is committed to providing services to our community, who are uninsured and underserved and have difficulty getting access to basic essential health care needs. As we continue our mission, it's crucial to keep our stakeholders informed about our financial health.

Financial Highlights

1. **Total Cost of running the clinic in 2025 was $50,314.**

   Some of the major costs include:

NCSC Rental fee for HHC	$26,600.00
Clinic Supplies	$5499.05
Quest Diagnostics Lab charges	$3934.81
Medical Equipment	$3034.74

2. **Future growth:** With a view to providing better service to our community, there are other capital items we still need to purchase and upgrade the infrastructure of the clinic.
3. **Our Commitment:** We are committed to provide care, free of cost, to our patients. Our volunteers work day and night to make this happen and ask for no compensation. However, running a clinic does have its costs, and there are bills we have to pay.
4. **Pledge to the community:** The clinic can only run with the support of the community. We ask our supporters to help the clinic carry out its mission to care for the underserved and uninsured people in our community. If you have supported the clinic in the past with a donation, we pledge to continue to show your support and reach different levels of sponsorship.
5. **Sponsorship Levels:** We've established **eight sponsorship levels**, each symbolizing a majestic mountain. Community members are encouraged to climb these metaphorical peaks by making donations. Here's a brief overview of the sponsorship levels:
   1. **Mount Everest Sponsor:** The pinnacle of support! - $29032 denoting the height of Mt Everest. Donations at this level significantly impact our clinic's operations and sustainability. Dr. Rosy Rajbhandary and Mr. Bal Joshi have reached this level.
   2. **Kangchenjunga Sponsor:** A challenging climb! - $20,000. Contributions at this level help us maintain high-quality healthcare services.
   3. **Lhotse Sponsor:** A formidable ascent! -$15,000. Donors at this level play a vital role in our outreach programs.
   4. Makalu Sponsor: A steep climb! - $10,000 These contributions support our medical equipment and technology upgrades.
   5. Cho Oyu Sponsor: A rewarding journey! -$5000. Donations at this level enhance patient care and comfort.
   6. Dhaulagiri Sponsor: A rugged path! -$3000. These funds contribute to our community health education initiatives.
   7. Manaslu Sponsor: A scenic route! $1000. Donors at this level help us expand our services to underserved populations.
   8. Annapurna Sponsor: A beautiful peak! -$500. Contributions here sustain our administrative and operational functions.

Call to Action

We invite our community to join us on this symbolic mountain expedition. By donating, you become part of our mission to provide accessible healthcare to those in need. Together, we can reach new heights and make a lasting impact.

Thank you for your continued support!

HIMALAYA HEALTH CLINIC: FREE CARE, COMPASSION, AND HOPE IN TEXAS

Raj Kumar Shrestha
Director
Himalaya Health Clinic

In the heart of Euless, Texas, a quiet yet powerful movement is transforming lives. Himalaya Health Clinic (HHC), a nonprofit initiative powered by the Texas Nepalese Medical Association (TNMA), provides free medical and dental care to uninsured individuals, offering not just treatment, but dignity, hope, and human connection.

Run entirely by volunteers and supported by community generosity, the clinic has become a lifeline for those who might otherwise go without essential healthcare. From routine check-ups to urgent medical concerns, HHC stands as a testament to what compassion in action can achieve.

A Vision Rooted in Service

Since its founding in 2020, Himalaya Health Clinic has been driven by a simple yet profound goal: to expand access to quality healthcare for underserved communities. After years of planning and collaboration, the clinic opened its doors to patients on May 7, 2023.

I have had the privilege of being part of this journey from the beginning, helping shape the vision, witnessing its challenges, and ultimately seeing it come to life. What began as an idea has grown into a trusted community resource, powered entirely by volunteers who give their time and expertise selflessly.

My own understanding of service, however, began long before HHC.

In 2003, I participated in a time-sensitive rescue mission in Nepal, helping evacuate a severely injured climber from the Mount Everest region to Kathmandu. That experience, saving a life under immense pressure, revealed to me a deeper kind of fulfillment. During my 17 years of service at the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu (1992–2010), where I participated in numerous search and rescue missions, and later, while volunteering for more than two months in Nepal following the 2015 earthquake, I witnessed again and again how service can bring meaning beyond measure.

Today, I find that same sense of purpose at Himalaya Health Clinic. It is a reminder that true fulfillment is not found in material success, but in compassion, humility, and the willingness to serve others.

> Volunteer physicians and specialists evaluate each patient carefully, providing treatment when possible and guiding them toward appropriate care when needs extend beyond the clinic's scope.

Stories That Define the Mission

The true impact of Himalaya Health Clinic is best understood through the lives it touches. Each patient carries a unique story—often marked by hardship, resilience, and hope.

Journey to Better Health

A 74-year old lady resides in a region where access to affordable healthcare is limited when she arrived at HHC in May 2024 for urgent medical attention. Initial evaluations revealed concerning abnormalities, prompting immediate follow-up. A nurse practitioner contacted her, even late at night, urging her to seek emergency care without delay.

After receiving treatment and returning for follow-up visits, her health improved significantly. Today, she continues her care at the clinic. Her warm smile reflects not only recovery, but also relief, the kind that comes from knowing someone cares.

Long Journey for Care

A 55-year-old man traveled nearly three hours from a small town near Houston to reach the clinic, relying on a friend for transportation. Living with uncontrolled blood pressure and diabetes, he had struggled for years without consistent care.
At HHC, he was able to speak with a physician in his native language, a simple yet powerful connection. His treatment plan was carefully adjusted, and for the first time in years, he felt understood.

"Traveling so far was worth it," he shared. "I finally feel like my health is in good hands."

Relief from Pain

A student, aged 25, in the Dallas–Fort Worth area endured weeks of severe dental pain but could not afford treatment. At one point, he even considered traveling back to Nepal for care.

Instead, he found help at Himalaya Health Clinic. Volunteer dentists diagnosed and treated his infection, later performing a tooth extraction, all at no cost. What he received was more than treatment, it was compassion and respect.

"They truly care about the community," he said.

Care Beyond Medicine

At Himalaya Health Clinic, patients receive more than clinical services. They receive time, attention, and understanding.

Volunteer physicians and specialists evaluate each patient carefully, providing treatment when possible and guiding them toward appropriate care when needs extend beyond the clinic's scope. Services include medical consultations, dental care, basic diagnostic testing, and preventive screenings, offered free or at highly subsidized rates.

Language accessibility, cultural understanding, and patient centered care are central to the clinic's approach. For many patients, this is the first time they feel fully heard in a healthcare setting.

How the Clinic Works

Himalaya Health Clinic serves uninsured individuals of all backgrounds, regardless of age, gender, race, or religion. While the clinic does not provide emergency care, it plays a vital role in bridging healthcare gaps through a dedicated team of volunteer healthcare professionals across multiple specialties. Depending on availability, these include dentists, cardiologists, family medicine physicians, gastroenterologists, internal medicine physicians, neurologists, pain management specialists, rheumatologists, and other specialists who contribute their expertise to patient care. In addition, behind every visit is a coordinated effort by other volunteers—nurses, pharmacists, translators, IT, Administrative support, and young volunteers (the future of HHC) —working together to ensure each patient receives thoughtful, high-quality care.

Patients register online in advance, as appointments are limited and in high demand. The clinic operates

> Every service provided, every patient seen, and every life impacted is made possible through volunteerism and donations.

> While the clinic does not provide emergency care, it plays a vital role in bridging healthcare gaps through a dedicated team of volunteer healthcare professionals across multiple specialties.

twice a month—typically on the first and third Sundays—offering structured visits that include triage, consultation, lab services, pharmacy support, and follow-up guidance.

Powered by Community

What makes Himalaya Health Clinic truly remarkable is that it is entirely community-driven. Every service provided, every patient seen, and every life impacted is made possible through volunteerism and donations.

Healthcare professionals contribute their expertise. Community members offer their time and support. Donors help sustain operations, ensuring that care remains accessible to those who need it most.

This collective effort reflects a shared belief: that healthcare is not a privilege, but a basic human need.

A Continuing Mission of Hope

As Himalaya Health Clinic continues to grow, so does its impact—each clinic day bringing new patients, new challenges, and new opportunities to serve.

But the mission remains the same—to provide compassionate, accessible care and to restore dignity where it is often lost.

In a world where healthcare can feel out of reach for many, Himalaya Health Clinic stands as a reminder of what is possible when a community comes together with purpose.

Because sometimes, the most meaningful form of healing begins not with medicine—but with kindness. operations of the clinic.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Raj Kumar Shrestha has been serving as the Executive Office Director of Himalaya Health Clinic (HHC), a nonprofit organization, since 2020. In this volunteer role, he brings extensive professional experience and a strong commitment to organizational excellence. He plays a key role in planning, organizing, and managing the clinic's operations, helping ensure the effective delivery and continued growth of its programs and services for the community.

Mr. Shrestha resides in Dallas, Texas, and is originally from Aarughat, Gorkha, Nepal. He lives with his wife, Muna, his daughter, Dr. Rajani Shrestha, a family physician, and his son, Muraj Shrestha. Before immigrating to the United States in 2010, Raj worked in the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal. Not only did he serve in the Embassy for 17 consecutive years, but his exemplary performance also made him the recipient of numerous awards, including the highest recognition of the **"Best Foreign Service National Employee of the Year"** Award in 2007.

Following the devastating earthquakes in Nepal in 2015, Mr. Shrestha demonstrated remarkable humanitarian dedication. He traveled to Nepal as part of a volunteer team and spent over two months supporting affected communities under challenging conditions. As a volunteer with the

Nepalese Society of Texas (NST), he participated in search and rescue efforts across more than eight districts, helped organize health camps, and assisted in distributing relief supplies to remote and underserved populations.

Mr. Shrestha has extensive knowledge in management, strategic planning, administration, customer service, U.S. immigration processes, and crisis management. He continues to apply these skills through his ongoing service with Himalaya Health Clinic and other humanitarian initiatives, making a meaningful impact on the communities he serves.

Pratibha Agarwal
MD

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

HOW EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME MAY WORSEN ADHD SYMPTOMS

Introduction

Electronic devices are deeply embedded in modern adolescent life. Smartphones, tablets, gaming systems, and social media platforms provide constant connection, entertainment, and access to information. While technology offers many benefits, growing research suggests that excessive and unstructured screen time may worsen attention difficulties in adolescents, particularly those with Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders affecting children and adolescents. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 10% of children in the United States have been diagnosed with ADHD. Symptoms often persist into adolescence, a developmental stage already characterized by increasing academic demands, emotional changes, and social pressures.

> Social media introduces additional challenges for adolescents with ADHD. Online environments provide rapid feedback and social comparison, which can intensify emotional responses.

In recent years, clinicians and researchers have become increasingly concerned about how constant digital stimulation may interact with the ADHD brain, potentially intensifying symptoms such as inattention, impulsivity, emotional dysregulation, and sleep disturbances.

Understanding ADHD during Adolescence

ADHD is characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that interfere with daily functioning. While younger children may display overt hyperactivity, adolescents often experience symptoms differently.

Common ADHD challenges during adolescence include:

- Difficulty sustaining attention during schoolwork
- Poor organization and time management
- Increased procrastination
- Impulsive decision-making
- Emotional reactivity and frustration intolerance

Adolescents also gain greater independence over how they spend their time. Without clear limits, many teens may spend several hours daily

on digital devices, which can exacerbate existing attention and self-regulation difficulties.

Why Electronics Are Particularly Engaging for the ADHD Brain

Digital platforms are intentionally designed to capture attention. Social media feeds, gaming environments, and short-form videos provide rapid stimulation, instant rewards, and constant novelty. For adolescents with ADHD, this can be especially compelling.

Neuroscientific research suggests that ADHD involves differences in dopamine regulation, a neurotransmitter involved in reward and motivation. Activities that provide immediate feedback—such as receiving likes on social media or advancing levels in a game—activate these reward pathways. This constant stimulation can make everyday tasks like homework, reading, or classroom learning feel comparatively slow and unrewarding. As a result, adolescents may struggle to disengage from devices and re-focus on academic responsibilities.

What Research Shows

A growing body of research has examined the relationship between digital media use and attention difficulties.

One of the most widely cited studies, published in JAMA, followed 2,587 high school students over a two-year period. None of the participants had significant ADHD symptoms at the beginning of the study. Researchers found that adolescents who frequently used multiple forms of digital media—including social media, streaming video, texting, and gaming—were significantly more likely to develop ADHD-related symptoms over time.

Specifically:

- 10.5% of teens who frequently used all digital media platforms developed ADHD symptoms
- 9.5% of teens with high use of several platforms developed symptoms
- Only 4.6% of adolescents with minimal digital media exposure showed similar symptoms

These findings show that adolescents with heavy digital media use are more than twice as likely to develop attention difficulties compared to their peers with lower usage.

Additional longitudinal research published in Scientific Reports (2023) followed nearly 4,000 adolescents for five years. The study found that increases in screen time were associated with worsening ADHD symptoms in the same year, particularly impulsivity and difficulties with behavioral inhibition.

Brain imaging studies have also provided insight into potential neurological effects. Research from large pediatric neurodevelopment studies indicates that higher screen exposure in late childhood may predict increased attention problems two years later, along with differences in brain regions responsible for attention control, executive functioning, and reward processing. While these studies show associations rather than direct causation, the consistent findings across large populations suggest that excessive screen use may amplify existing attention vulnerabilities.

Sleep Disruption: A Major Contributor

One of the most significant ways electronics worsen ADHD symptoms is through sleep disruption. A significant number of adolescents use phones or tablets late into the evening. Screens emit blue light, which suppresses melatonin production and delays the body's natural sleep cycle. Additionally, engaging digital content keeps the brain alert at a time when it should be preparing for rest.

Insufficient sleep can significantly worsen ADHD symptoms, leading to:

- Increased inattention
- Poor impulse control
- Irritability and mood instability
- Reduced academic performance
- Greater anxiety and emotional dysregulation

For adolescents already vulnerable to attention difficulties, chronic sleep deprivation can further impair cognitive functioning.

Social Media and Emotional Regulation

Social media introduces additional challenges for adolescents with ADHD. Online environments

provide rapid feedback and social comparison, which can intensify emotional responses.

Adolescents with ADHD may be more likely to:

- Post impulsively
- React strongly to online conflicts
- Spend excessive time checking notifications
- Experience anxiety related to peer validation

These patterns can contribute to emotional stress and further distract from academic and daily responsibilities.

Supporting Healthy Technology Habits

Although electronic devices are a permanent part of modern life, balanced and intentional use can help protect adolescent mental health.

Experts recommend several strategies:

1. Establish clear screen-time limits.

Limiting recreational screen use to one to two hours per day during school weeks can help prevent excessive exposure.

2. Keep devices out of bedrooms at night.

Charging phones outside the bedroom supports healthy sleep routines.

3. Encourage structured offline activities.

Sports, music, creative hobbies, and in-person social interactions provide stimulation without the cognitive overload of screens.

4. Promote mindful technology use.

Not all screen time is harmful. Educational tools, creative software, and structured learning platforms can be beneficial when used intentionally.

5. Model healthy digital habits.

Adolescents are more likely to follow technology limits when families establish shared boundaries.

Conclusion

Electronic devices and digital media are powerful tools that shape how adolescents learn, socialize, and entertain themselves. However, growing evidence suggests that excessive and unregulated screen use may worsen ADHD symptoms by overstimulating reward pathways, reducing sustained attention, disrupting sleep, and increasing emotional reactivity.

For adolescents with ADHD, developing healthy technology habits is an important component of overall mental health. With thoughtful boundaries, supportive guidance, and balanced routines, families can help teens benefit from technology while protecting attention, academic success, and emotional well-being.

Key Takeaways for Parents: Managing Screen Use in Teens with ADHD (For side column)

Parents often ask how they can realistically manage technology use without constant conflict. While electronics are part of modern life, small changes in daily routines can significantly improve focus and emotional regulation for adolescents with ADHD.

- Set predictable screen time limits.

  Consistency is key. Establish clear daily limits for recreational screen use. Many pediatric organizations recommend no more than one to two hours per day of non-academic screen time during the school week.
- Create device-free sleep routines.

  Phones and tablets should ideally be kept outside the bedroom overnight. Charging devices in a shared space help protect sleep quality and reduce late-night scrolling.
- Encourage structured activities.

  Physical activity, music, art, and extracurricular programs help regulate attention and reduce reliance on digital stimulation.

Neuroscientific research suggests that ADHD involves differences in dopamine regulation, a neurotransmitter involved in reward and motivation. Activities that provide immediate feedback—such as receiving likes on social media or advancing levels in a game—activate these reward pathways

- Use technology intentionally.

  Educational tools, productivity apps, and structured learning programs can support organization and time management for teens with ADHD.
- Model healthy digital habits.

  Adolescents are far more likely to follow technology boundaries when parents demonstrate balanced device use themselves.

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ABOUT THE WRITER

Double Board-Certified Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychiatrist, **Dr. Pratibha Agarwal**, MD, is a child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist serving families in North Texas since 2023. She graduated from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH), Nepal in 2007. She completed her psychiatry residency at Nassau University Medical Center (NUMC) in New York, followed by Child and Adolescent Psychiatry fellowship at Stony Brook University (SUNY Stony Brook). She provides comprehensive psychiatric care for children, adolescents, and adults, with clinical interests in ADHD, Autism spectrum disorders, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and developmental conditions. She currently practices in the Frisco and Little Elm area, where she works closely with families and schools to support the emotional and cognitive development of young people.

Mahesh Shrestha
MD, FAAP, DABOM

INTRODUCING PEDIATRIC OBESITY TO THE PUBLIC
A SHORT Q & A GUIDE

Q1: What is pediatric obesity?
Pediatric obesity is a chronic medical condition in which a child or adolescent has excess body fat that may negatively affect their health. It is typically assessed using Body Mass Index (BMI) percentiles specific to age and sex. A child is considered obese when their BMI is at or above the 95th percentile for their peer group.

Q2: Why is pediatric obesity an important issue?
Pediatric obesity has become a significant public health concern due to its increasing prevalence and its association with both immediate and long-term health risks. Children with obesity are more likely to develop conditions such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and sleep apnea, as well as experience social stigma, bullying, and effects on weight-bearing joints. Additionally, obesity in childhood often persists into adulthood, increasing the risk of chronic diseases and reducing life expectancy.

Q3: What causes pediatric obesity?
Pediatric obesity is a complex condition influenced by multiple factors. These include poor dietary habits (such as high consumption of processed and high-calorie foods), lack of physical activity, genetic predisposition, environmental influences, and behavioral patterns. Social determinants, such as access to healthy foods, safe recreational spaces, and education, also play a crucial role.

Q4: Are there psychological or social effects?
Yes. Beyond physical health, pediatric obesity can impact a child's emotional and social well-being. Children with obesity may experience low self-esteem, bullying, social isolation, and depression. These factors can further contribute to unhealthy behaviors, creating a cycle that is difficult to break.

Q5: How can pediatric obesity be prevented?
Prevention begins with promoting healthy lifestyles early in life. This includes encouraging balanced nutrition, limiting sugary beverages, promoting regular physical activity, and reducing screen time. Families, schools, and communities all play an essential role in creating environments that support healthy choices. Engaging

> Addressing obesity early in life is critical because habits formed in childhood often persist into adulthood.

in physical activity for 30 to 60 minutes daily and increasing intake of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and beans can help prevent and manage obesity.

Q6: What roles do parents and caregivers play?

They influence food choices, activity levels, and daily routines. Modeling healthy behaviors, preparing nutritious meals, and fostering an active lifestyle can significantly reduce the risk of obesity. Importantly, creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment helps children build a positive relationship with food and their bodies.

Q7: How is pediatric obesity treated?

Treatment often involves a combination of lifestyle changes, including improved diet, increased physical activity, and behavioral modifications. In some cases, healthcare providers may recommend structured programs involving dietitians, psychologists, and pediatricians. Severe cases may require more advanced interventions, including FDA-approved weight loss medications, but these are less common and carefully monitored.

Q8: What can communities and policymakers do?

Communities and policymakers can support prevention efforts by improving access to healthy foods, creating safe spaces for physical activity, implementing school-based nutrition programs, and regulating the marketing of unhealthy foods to children. Public awareness campaigns are also key in educating families about healthy habits.

Q9: Why is early intervention important?

Addressing obesity early in life is critical because habits formed in childhood often persist into adulthood. Early intervention can prevent the development of serious health conditions and improve both physical and mental well-being over the long term. It is important to talk to your pediatrician and seek help if needed.

Q10: What is the key takeaway for the public?

Pediatric obesity is not simply a matter of personal choice—it is a multifaceted issue influenced by biological, social, and environmental factors. Addressing it requires a collective effort from families, healthcare providers, schools, and policymakers. By working together, society can create healthier environments that support children in leading active, balanced lives.

Conclusion

Pediatric obesity is a growing challenge, but it is also preventable and manageable. Increasing awareness, fostering supportive environments, and promoting healthy habits can make a meaningful difference. Public understanding is the first step toward lasting change.

ABOUT THE WRITER

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Rosy Rajbhandary
MD

UNDERSTANDING RHEUMATOLOGY

WHEN TO SEE A RHEUMATOLOGIST AND THE ROLE OF LIFESTYLE IN AUTOIMMUNE AND JOINT HEALTH

Rheumatology is a specialized field of medicine that focuses on diseases affecting the joints, muscles, bones, and immune system. A rheumatologist is a physician who specializes in diagnosing and treating autoimmune diseases and musculoskeletal conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, gout, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, vasculitis, Sjogren's syndrome, scleroderma, and osteoporosis. Understanding what a rheumatologist does, when to seek specialty care, and how lifestyle factors influence inflammation can help patients recognize symptoms early and improve long-term health outcomes.

Warning signs that may require evaluation by a rheumatologist include prolonged joint pain or swelling, morning stiffness lasting more than thirty minutes, unexplained fatigue, recurrent fevers, rashes, muscle weakness, or elevated inflammatory markers on blood tests. Early evaluation is important because untreated inflammatory diseases may lead to irreversible joint damage, disability, or complications involving the lungs, kidneys, heart, or nervous system.

Lifestyle factors play a major role in inflammation and autoimmune disease activity. Although medications remain essential for many rheumatologic conditions, healthy habits may help reduce symptoms, improve quality of life, and decrease the frequency of disease flares.

One of the most discussed topics in rheumatology is the anti-inflammatory diet. While no diet can completely cure these conditions, scientific evidence suggests that certain eating patterns may reduce inflammation. Diets rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fatty fish, olive oil, nuts, and legumes are associated with lower inflammatory markers and improved cardiovascular health. The Mediterranean diet, in particular, has shown benefits for patients with inflammatory arthritis.

> Stress is frequently reported as a trigger for autoimmune flares. Although stress alone does not directly cause autoimmune disease, chronic stress may influence immune system function and inflammatory pathways.

Sleep is another critical but often overlooked factor in autoimmune disease management. Poor sleep quality can worsen pain sensitivity, fatigue, mood, and inflammation. Establishing consistent sleep habits, limiting screen exposure before bedtime, managing stress, and treating underlying sleep disorders such as sleep apnea can significantly improve overall well-being.

Exercise is also an important component of rheumatologic care. Low-impact exercises such as walking, swimming, cycling, yoga, and strength training can improve joint flexibility, muscle strength, balance, and cardiovascular health. Exercise also helps reduce stiffness and fatigue. Importantly, physical activity should be individualized based on the patient's condition and level of disease activity.

Obesity is closely linked to inflammation and joint disease. Excess body weight places additional mechanical stress on weight-bearing joints such as the knees and hips, increasing the risk of osteoarthritis. Even modest weight loss can improve pain, mobility, and overall disease control.

Smoking is another major contributor to autoimmune disease risk. Cigarette smoking is strongly associated with rheumatoid arthritis and may increase disease severity. Smoking can also worsen lupus, vasculitis, and other inflammatory conditions while increasing cardiovascular risk.

Patients who smoke often have poorer responses to treatment compared with nonsmokers. Smoking cessation is therefore one of the most important preventive measures patients can take for both rheumatologic and overall health.

Vitamin D has also received increasing attention in immune health research. Vitamin D plays a role in immune regulation and bone metabolism. Low vitamin D levels are common in patients with autoimmune diseases and may contribute to fatigue, muscle pain, and osteoporosis risk. Although supplementation alone is not a cure for autoimmune disease, correcting deficiencies may support bone health and immune function.

Many people are surprised to learn that arthritis and autoimmune diseases can affect organs beyond the joints. Certain inflammatory conditions may involve the eyes, lungs, heart, kidneys, blood vessels, or nervous system. For example, rheumatoid arthritis can cause lung inflammation, while ankylosing spondylitis may lead to painful eye inflammation known as uveitis. Lupus can affect the kidneys, heart, and brain. This systemic nature of autoimmune disease highlights the importance of comprehensive medical care and routine monitoring.

Another important connection exists between psoriasis and joint disease. Psoriasis is commonly recognized as a skin condition causing red, scaly plaques, but up to thirty percent of patients with psoriasis may develop psoriatic arthritis. Joint symptoms may include swelling, stiffness, tendon inflammation, or changes in the nails. Early diagnosis is important because untreated psoriatic arthritis can cause permanent joint damage.

Autoimmune diseases can also mimic anxiety or depression. Chronic fatigue, brain fog, sleep disturbances, pain, and systemic inflammation may contribute to mood changes and cognitive symptoms. Patients are sometimes initially misdiagnosed with stress-related conditions before an autoimmune disease is identified. Mental health and physical health are closely interconnected, and comprehensive care should address both.

Pregnancy and autoimmune disease represent another fascinating and important area of rheumatology. Some autoimmune diseases improve during pregnancy, while others may flare. Certain medications are considered safe during pregnancy, whereas others must be stopped in advance due to potential risks to the fetus. Careful coordination between rheumatologists and obstetricians is essential to ensure the health of both mother and baby.

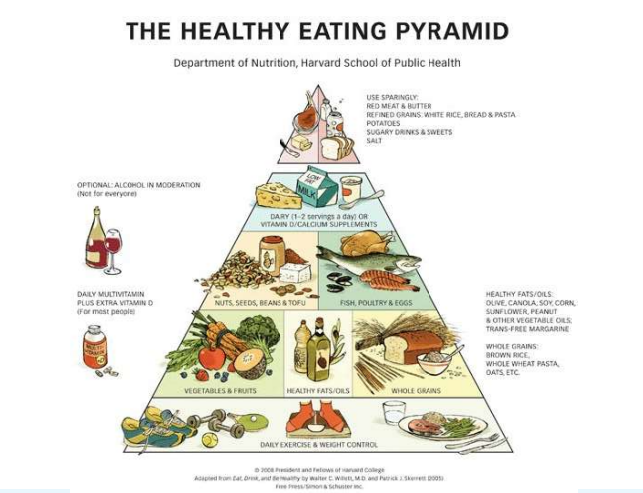
> One symptom commonly described in rheumatology is morning stiffness. Many patients experience stiffness upon waking that gradually improves with movement.

Stress is frequently reported as a trigger for autoimmune flares. Although stress alone does not directly cause autoimmune disease, chronic stress may influence immune system function and inflammatory pathways. Emotional stress can worsen symptoms such as fatigue, pain, and sleep disturbances. Techniques such as mindfulness, counseling, exercise, meditation, and social support may help patients cope more effectively with chronic illness.

One symptom commonly described in rheumatology is morning stiffness. Many patients experience stiffness upon waking that gradually improves with movement. Morning stiffness lasting longer than thirty to sixty minutes is often associated with inflammatory arthritis rather than simple "wear and tear" osteoarthritis. This symptom can provide an important clue during diagnosis.

Rheumatology continues to evolve rapidly as researchers gain a deeper understanding of the immune system and inflammation. Advances in biologic therapies and targeted medications have dramatically improved outcomes for many patients living with autoimmune diseases. At the same time, lifestyle measures such as healthy nutrition, exercise, sleep optimization, smoking cessation, and stress management remain powerful tools in maintaining long-term health.

Ultimately, recognizing early symptoms, seeking timely specialty care, and adopting healthy lifestyle habits can make a significant difference in the lives of patients with rheumatologic diseases. Education and awareness are essential in helping people understand that autoimmune and inflammatory conditions are not simply "joint problems," but complex diseases requiring comprehensive and compassionate care.



ABOUT THE WRITER

Dr. Rajbhandary is a rheumatologist and practices at Texas Health Huguley Hospital, Fort Worth South, and has a clinic in Burleson, Texas. She is double board-certified in Internal Medicine and Rheumatology. She completed her internship and residency in Internal Medicine at Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston, New Jersey. She completed a fellowship in Rheumatology at the Los Angeles County + USC in California.

She has been voted a Top Doc in Fort Worth consecutively from 2017 to 2026 by Fort Worth Magazine and 360 West. **Dr. Rajbhandary** has authored several articles published in major rheumatology journals. She is a member of several professional organizations, including the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), American Medical Association (AMA), Texas Medical Association (TMA), and the International Society for Clinical Densitometry (ISCD).

TNMA HIMALAYA HEALTH CLINIC

COMPASSION IN ACTION POWER OF VOLUNTEERISM BEHIND HIMALAYA HEALTH CLINIC

Lila Shrestha
Director
Executive Office, TNMA
Hon. Founding Member

Discover how dedication & compassion can transform a community.

The heroes turning care into community impact.

Community health is one of the most fundamental pillars of a strong and thriving society. Yet many individuals and families—especially immigrants, uninsured residents, and underserved populations—often face barriers when seeking medical care. Recognizing this need, the Texas Nepalese Medical Association (TNMA) launched an initiative that reflects the true spirit of service and compassion: the Himalaya Health Clinic (HHC).

As one of the founding members and Executive Director of TNMA, I have had the privilege of witnessing many meaningful initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of our community. Among these efforts, the Himalaya Health Clinic stands out as a remarkable example of how volunteerism, dedication, and collaboration can transform lives.

Since May 2023, Himalaya Health Clinic has been operating as a **free community clinic held twice every month**, offering medical services to those who might otherwise struggle to access healthcare. What makes this initiative truly special is the incredible commitment of the volunteers who give their time, knowledge, and compassion to serve others.

A Community United for Health

The Himalaya Health Clinic was created with a simple yet powerful mission: **to provide accessible healthcare services while promoting health awareness within the community**. The clinic brings together a diverse group of volunteers who share a common goal—to serve humanity through healthcare.

Every clinic session is made possible by a team of dedicated professionals and community members. Medical doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, and non-medical volunteers work side by side to ensure that patients receive comprehensive care and guidance. From registration to consultation, medication dispensing, and patient education, every step reflects the collective spirit of teamwork.

Medical professionals provide essential consultations and screenings, dentists offer dental evaluations and care, nurses assist with patient

assessments and vital monitoring, and pharmacists help ensure safe medication management. Meanwhile, non-medical volunteers play a crucial role in coordinating patient flow, assisting with interpretation, organizing clinic logistics, and supporting patients throughout their visit.

Together, this multidisciplinary team has created a welcoming environment where patients feel cared for and respected.

Leadership that Inspires: Raj Shrestha

While the success of Himalaya Health Clinic is undoubtedly a team effort, it is important to recognize individuals whose extraordinary dedication keeps the initiative running smoothly. One such individual is Raj Shrestha, the Director of Himalaya Health Clinic.

Since the very beginning of the clinic in May 2023, Raj Shrestha has demonstrated an exceptional level of commitment and leadership. From my perspective as a founding member and Executive Director of Texas Nepalese Medical Association, I have personally observed how tirelessly he works to ensure the success of every clinic session.

Running a free clinic twice a month requires careful planning, coordination, and consistent effort. Raj works day and night—before and after each clinic—to organize volunteers, prepare supplies, coordinate schedules, and ensure that every patient receives proper attention. His work does not end when the clinic doors close; he continues to follow up on logistics, evaluate operations, and prepare for the next clinic.

His dedication goes beyond administrative responsibilities. He embodies the spirit of service that defines the mission of Himalaya Health Clinic. Whether it is welcoming volunteers, assisting patients, or solving unexpected challenges during clinic hours, Raj approaches every task with humility, patience, and unwavering commitment.

Such leadership is truly inspiring, not only to volunteers but also to the broader community.

A Growing Impact on Community Health

Since its launch, Himalaya Health Clinic has made a meaningful difference in the lives of many individuals and families. By providing free medical consultations, dental services, medication guidance, and preventive health education, the clinic helps address both immediate healthcare needs and long-term wellness.

Many patients who visit the clinic are grateful not only for the medical assistance they receive but also for the compassion and respect shown by the volunteers. For some, the clinic may represent their first opportunity to discuss health concerns with a healthcare professional. Early detection of health conditions, preventive screenings, and basic health education can make a significant difference in improving overall well-being.

Equally important is the clinic's role in **raising health awareness within the community**. By encouraging preventive care and healthy lifestyle choices, the Himalaya Health Clinic contributes to building a healthier and more informed community.

The Spirit of Volunteerism

One of the most inspiring aspects of the Himalaya Health Clinic is the spirit of volunteerism that drives it. Healthcare professionals with busy schedules generously dedicate their time and expertise for

For some, the clinic may represent their first opportunity to discuss health concerns with a healthcare professional. Early detection of health conditions, preventive screenings, and basic health education can make a significant difference in improving overall well-being.

the benefit of others. Community volunteers step forward with enthusiasm to support operations and ensure the smooth functioning of the clinic.

This shared commitment demonstrates the strength of unity and compassion within our community. It reminds us that meaningful change does not always require large resources—sometimes it simply requires dedicated individuals who are willing to serve.

The volunteers of Himalaya Health Clinic represent the best of our values: empathy, cooperation, and the desire to uplift others.

Looking Ahead

As the Himalaya Health Clinic continues to grow, there are many opportunities to expand its impact. Increasing community outreach, strengthening health education initiatives, and welcoming more volunteers will further enhance the clinic's ability to serve those in need.

With continued support from dedicated volunteers and the leadership of individuals like Raj Shrestha, the future of this initiative looks promising. The clinic stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved when compassion meets commitment.

A Tribute to Service

Himalaya Health Clinic is more than a healthcare initiative—it is a symbol of community solidarity and humanitarian service. It represents the belief that healthcare should be accessible to everyone and that volunteers can play a vital role in bridging gaps in care.

As someone who has closely witnessed this journey, I feel proud and deeply inspired by the dedication of the volunteers who make this clinic possible. In particular, I would like to recognize Raj Shrestha for his remarkable leadership and tireless efforts in ensuring that the clinic continues to serve the community twice every month.

His commitment reminds us that genuine service often happens quietly, behind the scenes, driven not by recognition but by a sincere desire to help others.

The Himalaya Health Clinic stands as a testament to what a united community can achieve—and it will undoubtedly continue to inspire many more acts of service in the years to come.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Lila Shrestha is a dedicated individual with a profound commitment to leadership and community service, leaving an enduring mark on society. Since Sept. 2018, **Mr. Shrestha** has been serving as an honorary founding member, and Director of the Executive Office at the Texas Nepalese Medical Association (TNMA). He has been instrumental in playing key roles in shaping the organization's mission. He consistently upholds TNMA's guiding principle: Working Together for a Healthy Community.

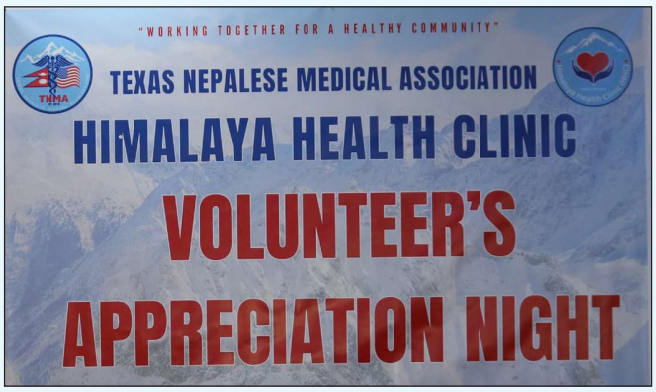
Additionally, **Mr. Shrestha** has been involved in various capacities with the Blood Donors of America (BDA) since December 2013, serving as the Founding General Secretary BDA Texas. He has held roles such as Executive Member, Publication Coordinator, and is currently a vice president.

Mr. Shrestha eagerly believes in 'Donating Blood is an Act of Solidarity.'

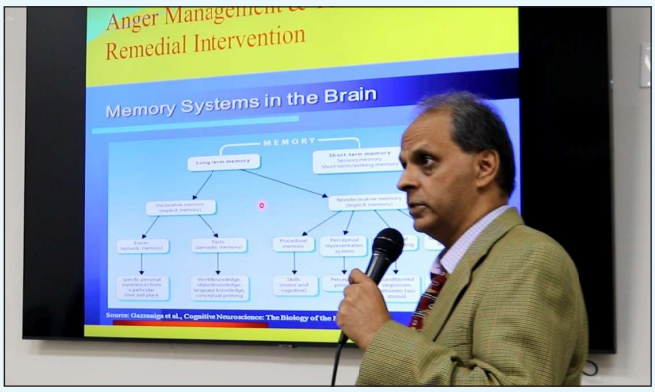
Having held pivotal roles as an Executive Member and Office In-Charge with the Nepalese Society of Texas (NST) 2009, **Mr. Shrestha's** commitment to Dallas-Fort Worth Nepali community engagement extends to his active involvement since 2004. Beyond his contributions to NST, BDA, and TNMA-**Mr. Shrestha** has consistently devoted his time to various social organizations, leaving an indelible mark on society. Volunteering is his passion, providing an avenue to connect with diverse individuals and extend assistance to those in need.

For inquiries or contact, **Mr. Shrestha** can be reached at 214-226-8634 or via email at Lilashres@gmail.com.

Volunteer Appreciation



Mental Health Initiatives



TNMA Participations

TNMA Participations

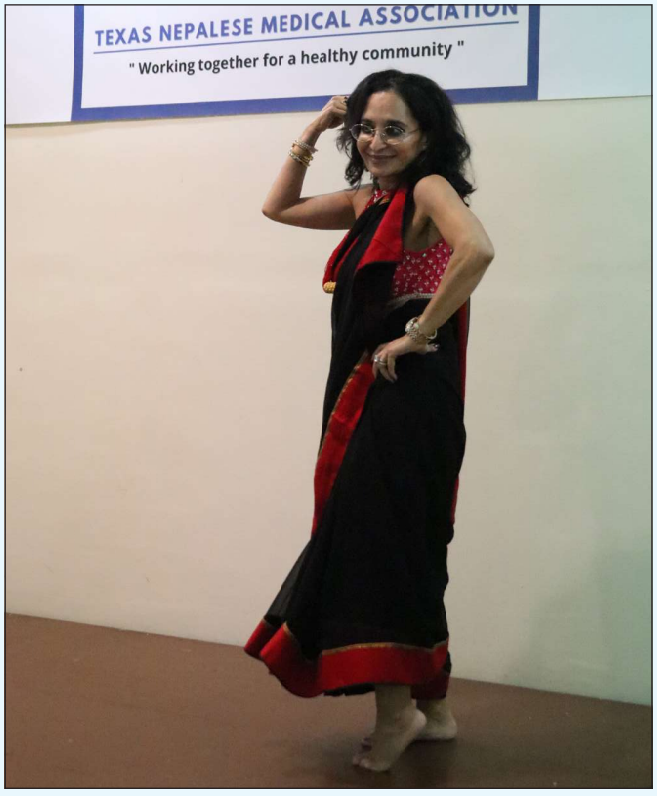
Dr. Bhagwan Koirala at HHC

AED Training

Purnima Shrestha & Himalaya

Purnima Shrestha & Himalaya

Holiday Party Mood



Holiday Party Mood

Holiday Party Mood

Clinic Day

Clinic Day

HIMALAYA
HEALTH CLINIC
Himalaya Health Clinic (HHC)
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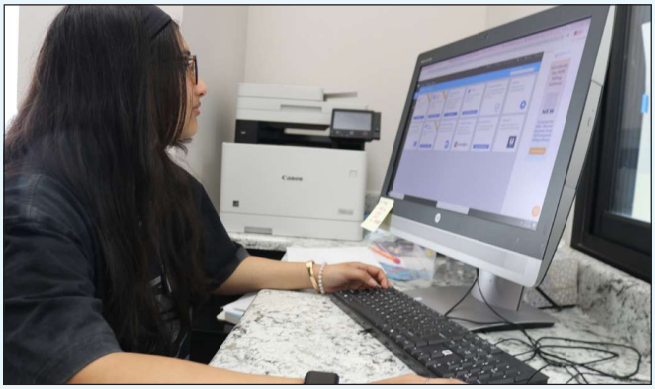
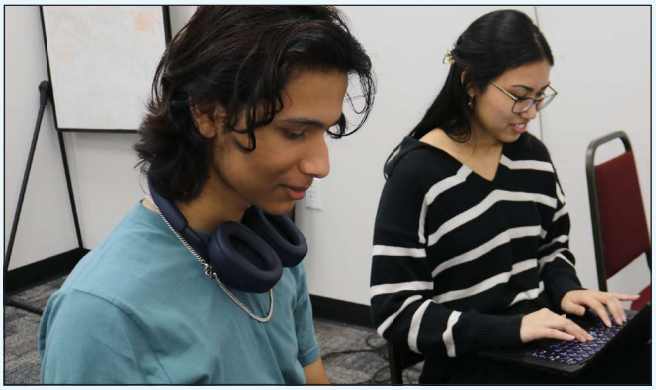
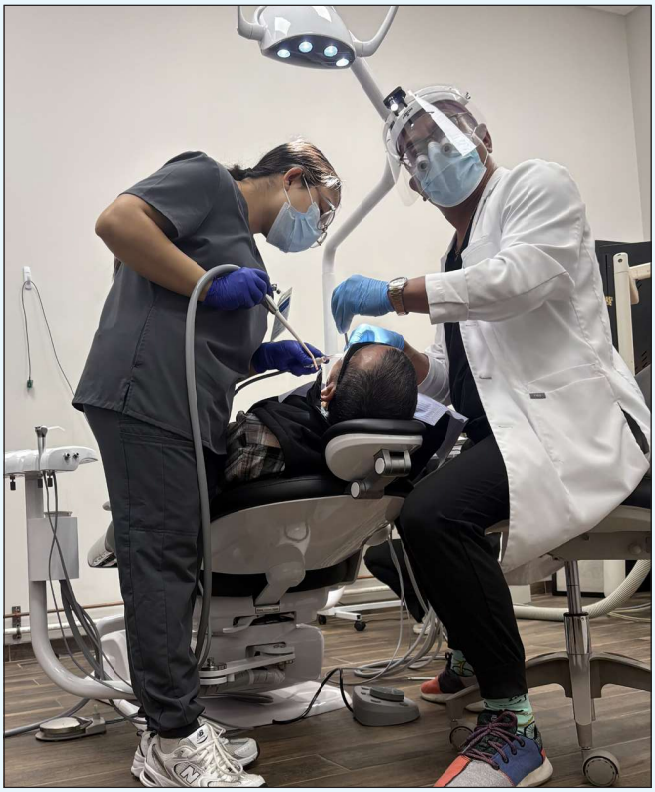
TEXAS NEPALESE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

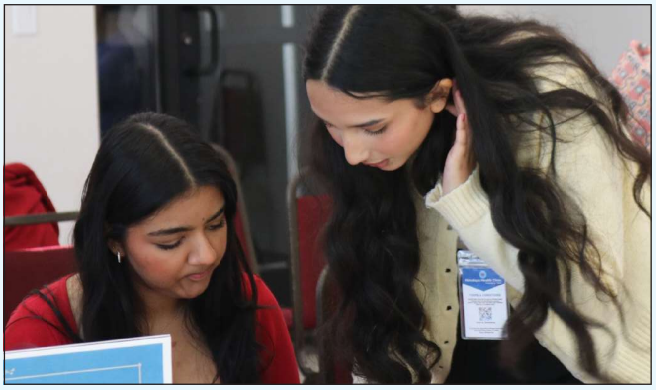


NO MEDICAL

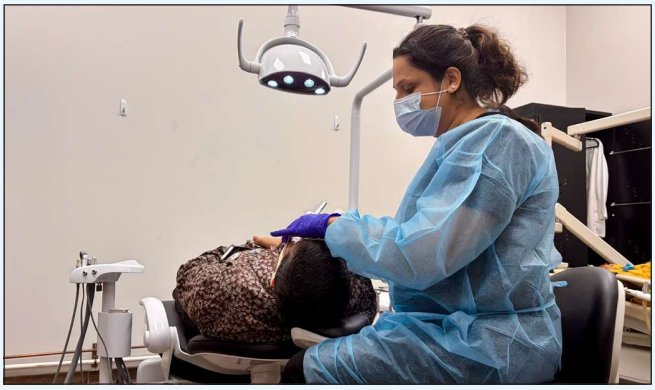
Clinic Day

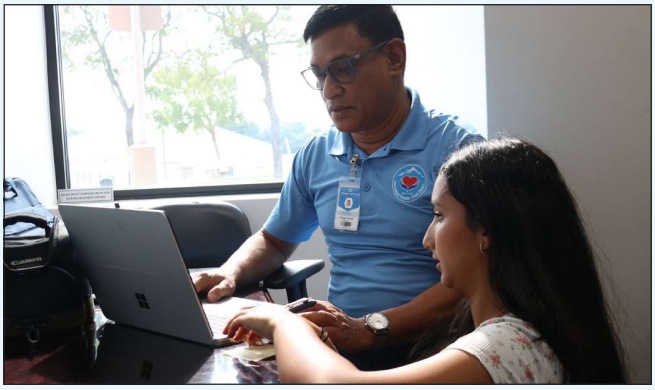




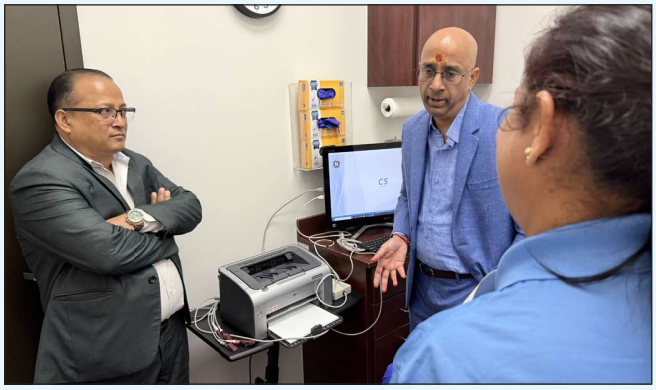


Volunteer In Action





Volunteer In Action



Smile

TNMA Gala Night for HHC
Press MEET
Thursday, April 16, 2026

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UNDERSTANDING VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY
A SIMPLE GUIDE

Suvashini Khand
FNP

I'm tired all the time." "My muscles feel weak or achy." "My mood has been off. "I get sick more often than I used to." "My bones or joints feel uncomfortable." "I thought it was just stress or getting older." "I Thought I was just tired from work". "I didn't realize sunlight mattered that much". These are common complaints of patient with vitamin D deficiency.

Vitamin D is often called the "sunshine vitamin" for good reason. Our bodies can make it when sunlight hits our skin. Yet despite living in a world full of sunshine, millions of people—of all ages, backgrounds, and lifestyles—don't get enough of it. Vitamin D deficiency is incredibly common, surprisingly silent, and more important to understand than most people realize.

Across the U.S., about 20–40% of adults have vitamin D deficiency, depending on age, race, season, and definition used. National survey data show that nearly 1 in 5 middleaged and older adults meet criteria for deficiency, with much higher rates in certain groups. (Wang et al. 2023)

What Exactly Is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is a nutrient and a hormone. It helps the body:

- Support healthy bones
- Maintain muscle strength
- Keep the immune system functioning
- Regulate mood and energy
- Support overall health

Think of it as a "helper vitamin" that keeps many systems running smoothly behind the scenes.

Why Do So Many People Become Deficient?

Even though sunlight is a natural source of vitamin D, modern life makes it surprisingly easy to fall short. Common reasons include:

- Spending most of the day indoors
- Wearing sunscreen (important for skin protection, but it reduces vitamin D production)
- Living in areas with limited sunlight during parts of the year
- Having darker skin, which naturally produces less vitamin D from sunlight

> Vitamin D deficiency is often subtle. Many people don't realize anything is wrong until symptoms become more noticeable.

- Aging, which reduces the skin's ability to make vitamin D
- Dietary patterns low in vitamin D–rich foods

None of these are "mistakes"—they're simply realities of how we live.

What Does Vitamin D Deficiency Feel Like?

Vitamin D deficiency is often subtle. Many people don't realize anything is wrong until symptoms become more noticeable. Some general symptoms people may experience include:

- Low energy or fatigue
- Muscle aches or weakness
- Mood changes
- Generalized discomfortFeeling "run down" more often

These symptoms can overlap with many other conditions, which is why people sometimes overlook vitamin D as a possible factor.

Why Vitamin D Matters for LongTerm Health

Vitamin D supports more than just bones and muscles. Research continues to explore its role in:

- Immune function
- Mood regulation
- Healthy aging
- Overall vitality

While vitamin D isn't a cureall, it's a foundational nutrient that helps the body function at its best.

Key Takeaways

- Vitamin D deficiency is common and often silent.
- Many people don't realize they're low until symptoms affect daily life.
- Understanding the basics of vitamin D helps people pay attention to their own wellbeing.
- If someone has concerns about vitamin D, a healthcare professional can help determine whether testing or further evaluation is appropriate.

Image: created by Suvashini Khand using AI tools

Reference:

Wang, T.-Y., Wang, H.-W., & Jiang, M.-Y. 2023. "Prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and associated risk of all-cause and cause-specific mortality among middle-aged and older adults in the United States." Frontiers in Nutrition, 10, 1163737. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2023.1163737

ABOUT THE WRITER

Family Nurse Practitioner with seven years of experience delivering relationshipcentered primary care, chronic disease management, and patient education, **Suvashini Khand** MSN, APRN, FNPC, is an experienced Family Nurse Practitioner with seven years of dedicated practice in primary care and family medicine. Her clinical work centers on delivering comprehensive care across the lifespan, with a strong emphasis on chronic disease management, preventive health, and patient education.

HPV-ASSOCIATED (HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS) ORAL CANCER
A GROWING HEALTH CONCERN AUTO IMMUNE AND JOINT HEALTH

Madhu Shrestha
PhD, MS, MDS, BDS

Highlights of the article:

Over the past two decades, we have seen a dramatic shift:

- Smoking-related oral cancers are decreasing
- HPV-related throat cancers are increasing
- Oropharyngeal cancer in men now exceeds cervical cancer in women in some regions

A Silent Shift in Cancer Trends

For many years, cancer prevention discussions focused on smoking and alcohol as the primary causes of oral cancer. However, a significant shift is underway. A common virus, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), is now playing a major role in cancers of the throat and mouth. While HPV has long been associated with cervical cancer, it is now increasingly linked to oropharyngeal cancers, which affect the back of the throat, tonsils, and base of the tongue. Alarmingly, these cancers are rising rapidly, especially among elderly men.

Understanding HPV

HPV is a very common virus spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact. Most people are exposed to it at some point in their lives, and in more than 80% of cases, the body clears the infection naturally. The virus may remain inactive without causing any disease, but it can get reactivated later in life during events such as immunosuppression. However, certain high-risk subtypes, especially HPV-16 and 18, can persist in the body for years. Over time, this persistence may lead to the development of precancerous changes and, eventually, cancer.

From Cervical to Throat Cancer: A Global Change

Oral and oropharyngeal cancers (OPC) remain a significant and growing public health burden in Texas, particularly among underserved populations. In 2025, over 58,450 new cases of OPC are projected in the U.S., with approximately 12,230 related deaths. HPV (Human Papillomavirus)-associated oral squamous cell carcinoma (HPV-OSCC) has now surpassed cervical cancer as the most prevalent HPV-associated cancer. Texas lacks routine screening, awareness, and policies for HPV-OSCC, particularly among uninsured and rural populations.

> If any lesion in the mouth does not heal within two weeks, it should be evaluated by a dental or medical professional.

According to National Cancer Institute data in 2023, the age-adjusted incidence rate of OPC is 7.7 cases per 100,000 people in Texas. Today, HPV-related throat cancer is among the fastest-growing cancers, particularly in men aged 40–55. This rise is linked to changing social and behavioral patterns, including increased oral exposure to the virus and earlier age of contact.

Why Are Men More Affected?

HPV-related throat cancer is now largely a men's health issue. One of the most concerning aspects of this trend is that men are disproportionately affected by HPV-related throat cancers. As we are aware, HPV-related cancer can be prevented by vaccination. However, vaccination rates remain lower in boys and men, and public awareness that HPV-related cancer can also occur in males is limited. Awareness about HPV-related oral cancer is still limited in many communities. This gap highlights the urgent need for education and prevention efforts targeting both genders.

Image 1: Clinical appearance of an HPV- associated throat cancer, also known as oropharyngeal carcinoma in the tonsillar area (Image from the author as referenced in Texas Dental Journal, 2025, 142 (2):76-82)

Early Warning Signs: What to Look For

HPV-related throat cancers are often difficult to detect early because they develop deep in the throat and may not cause symptoms initially. However, in the front regions of the mouth, called the oral cavity, some visible signs may indicate early or precancerous changes:

- White patches (leukoplakia)
- Red patches (erythroplakia)
- Persistent sores or thickened areas

These changes can be especially concerning in individuals with weakened immune systems, where infections may persist longer. In most individuals, HPV infections resolve within 1–2 years. However, the virus can sometimes remain dormant for decades. It may reactivate later in life, especially with immune suppression. This contributes to a second peak of HPV-related cancers in older unvaccinated adults. This "silent persistence" makes prevention and regular screening essential.

Image 2: HPV- associated oral cancer manifesting as an ulcero-proliferative, nodular lesion in the gums of a male patient who was immunocompromised. (Image from the author as referenced in Texas Dental Journal, 2025, 142 (2):76-82)

mage 3: HPV- associated pre-cancerous lesion manifesting as a white lesion in the ventral tongue and floor of the mouth (under the surface of the tongue and floor). (Image from the author as referenced in Texas Dental Journal, 2025, 142 (2):76-82)

HPV Vaccination: A Powerful Tool for Prevention of HPV-Related Cancers

The HPV vaccine is one of the most effective ways to prevent HPV-related cancers. Due to the increased incidence of HPV-related cervical cancers, this vaccination was initially given mostly to women below 20 years of age. It is now equally recommended for both boys and girls and is ideally given during adolescence (before exposure). However, newer evidence has expanded our understanding. The vaccine is now FDA-approved for individuals up to age 45. Studies show that adults aged 27–45 still develop strong immune responses after vaccination. Clinical trials demonstrate significant protection against persistent HPV infection and related disease in adults.

What does this mean if someone has doubts or has already been exposed to HPV?

An infected individual may not have been exposed to all nine strains. Vaccination can still protect against other high-risk types. It may help reduce the risk of future infections and reinfection, especially in aging populations where immunity is compromised.

Why does it matter to immigrant communities (like Nepalese and South Asian)?

Many adults in immigrant communities, including South Asian and Nepalese populations in the 1980s and early 1990s, were not vaccinated during childhood simply because HPV vaccination programs were not available or widely implemented, and awareness about HPV-related cancers was limited. This creates hidden vulnerability and increased risk. The burden of HPV-related cancers is not evenly distributed. Access to vaccination, awareness, and healthcare varies widely across communities. The HPV vaccine is widely available in the United States. Many insurance plans cover the vaccine, and programs are available to assist uninsured individuals.

A Community Responsibility

Regular vaccination in both male and female adolescents, education regarding the global burden of HPV-OSCC, and enabling HPV-OED screening, detection, and prevention as accessible measures within the community could be the best preventive efforts to reduce the burden of HPV-OSCC in Texas. HPV-related oral cancer is preventable and, in many cases, detectable early. However, it requires awareness, action, and community engagement.

For the Texas Nepalese community and beyond, this is an opportunity to:

- Increase awareness and open conversations about sexual health matters
- Encourage vaccination for both genders
- Ask your dentist for a comprehensive oral soft tissue examination during routine dental visits
- Reduce stigma around HPV discussions

Important Note:

If any lesion in the mouth does not heal within two weeks, it should be evaluated by a dental or medical professional.

Conflict of Interest: None

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ABOUT THE WRITER

Dr. Madhu Shrestha serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Diagnostic Sciences at the Texas A&M University School of Dentistry. She is involved in the research of HPV-associated oral cancer and precancer.

FROM THE GRANTS COMMITTEE CHAIR

TURNING A PROMISING START INTO A SUSTAINABLE REVENUE STREAM

Rajat Rajbhandari
PhD
Grants Committee Chair

Our first two external grants, totaling $13,000, are more than a financial win. They are proof of concept. Now comes the harder, more rewarding work: building the organizational foundation to make grant funding a permanent pillar of our mission.

Something meaningful happened quietly over the past year. Our clinic, built entirely on volunteerism, community trust, and a fierce belief that every immigrant family in the Dallas/Fort Worth area deserves access to quality healthcare, received its first external grants. A $3,000 award from the Texas Medical Association Foundation funded flu shot clinics that protected hundreds of families. A $10,000 grant from the Orchid Foundation extended our breast cancer screening program to women who may never have otherwise received that critical care. Together, these two awards represent something far larger than $13,000: they represent the world outside our community noticing what we are building and deciding it is worth investing in.

That recognition is not accidental. It is the result of years of dedicated service, meticulous patient care, and the unwavering commitment of our volunteers. But recognition alone does not sustain a mission. What comes next, deliberately, strategically, and with organizational discipline, will determine whether these first two grants were a lucky start or the foundation of a lasting revenue stream that grows our capacity for generations to come.

$13K	2	100+	∞
Total grants received to date	Funding partners secured	Foundations & corporates in our target landscape	Lives that depend on what we build next

The grant funding landscape for free clinics and immigrant health organizations is genuinely significant. Foundations like the Communities Foundation of Texas, the Meadows Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and dozens of corporate giving arms at regional healthcare systems and banks actively seek organizations like ours, nonprofits with clear community impact, measurable outcomes, and demonstrated need. The TMA Foundation

> Funders do not simply give to worthy causes. They invest in organizations they trust to deploy resources wisely, report outcomes honestly, and grow stronger with each dollar received.

> If you are interested in joining the Grants Committee, contributing to our data collection efforts, or supporting our grant writing work, please reach out. This is a team endeavor, and it has never needed more hands than it does right now.

and the Orchid Foundation did not give us money because we asked nicely. They gave because we could show who we serve, what we do, and why it matters. Every future grant starts from that same premise, and we have already proven we can make the case.

But here is the truth that every experienced grant-seeker knows: the moment a funder decides to look more closely at your organization is not when you want to start building your systems. The audit, the 990 review, and the program data request come fast, and they come for organizations that are ready and organizations that are not. The difference between those two is almost entirely preparation.

"Funders do not simply give to worthy causes. They invest in organizations they trust to deploy resources wisely, report outcomes honestly, and grow stronger with each dollar received."
— Grants Committee Chair

What does being grant-ready actually mean for a volunteer-run organization like ours? It means more than submitting a compelling application. It means building the operational infrastructure that tells a funder before they ask that we are serious stewards of their investment. Below are the five most critical areas where our clinic must focus its energy over the coming year.

What Grant-Readiness Requires

✦ Financial Transparency & Controls

Every serious funder will ask to see our IRS Form 990, recent financial statements, and budget-to-actual reports. Our books must be current, and our nonprofit financial hygiene unimpeachable.

✦ Program Outcome Tracking

Funders fund outcomes, not activities. We must move from counting patients seen to documenting health impact, screening rates, early detection numbers, vaccination coverage, and follow-up care coordination. We need a simple but consistent data collection process at every clinic event and a volunteer coordinator to own it. Our stories are powerful; numbers make them irrefutable.

✦ Dedicated Grant Writing Capacity

Grant writing cannot be a side task absorbed by whoever has spare time. We need to designate at least one or two volunteer grant writers who own our grants calendar, track deadlines, maintain a master application library of boilerplate language, and build institutional knowledge over time. Grant cycles are annual; relationship-building with program officers is multi-year. Continuity is everything.

✦ Organizational Documentation

Many funders require board meeting minutes, bylaws, conflict-of-interest policies, volunteer hour logs, and letters of support from partner organizations. These documents should exist in a well-organized, accessible grant-readiness folder, both physical and digital, updated regularly. If we have to scramble to produce them when a deadline is two days away, we will lose to organizations that have them ready.

✦ Funder Relationship Management

Grants are relationships. The Orchid Foundation and the TMA Foundation are not transactions to be completed—they are partners to be cultivated. We must send professional stewardship reports at the close of each funded project, invite program officers to our events, and stay in contact between grant cycles. A funder who renews is infinitely more valuable than a new one acquired each year.

A NOTE ON REALISTIC AMBITION

A well-prepared free clinic of our size and mission profile can realistically target $75,000 to $150,000 in annual grant revenue within three to five years,

supplementing but not replacing our community donations and volunteer base. That range could fund a part-time patient navigator, consistent diagnostic supplies, expanded specialty screening days, and the administrative infrastructure that makes us more effective for every patient we serve. The path starts with what we build internally, right now.

The work ahead is not glamorous. Spreadsheets, filing systems, committee meetings, reporting templates, none of it feels as meaningful as the moment a patient receives a diagnosis that changes her life or when a family gets vaccinated because we showed up in their neighborhood. But this infrastructure work is what makes those moments possible at scale, and possible consistently, year after year, regardless of which volunteers are in the room.

We began this journey with two grants and $13,000. With intentional organizational preparation, strong stewardship of the partnerships we have earned, and a Grants Committee that grows in capability and capacity, there is every reason to believe that external grants can become a meaningful and reliable revenue stream for our clinic, one that allows us to expand our services, deepen our impact, and honor the trust that our community has always placed in us.

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If you are interested in joining the Grants Committee, contributing to our data collection efforts, or supporting our grant writing work, please reach out. This is a team endeavor, and it has never needed more hands than it does right now.

Harihar Birahi
Kathmandu

HEALING WITH HEART IN DALLAS
A COMMUNITY-LED CLINIC BRINGING CARE, COMPASSION, AND HOPE TO NEPALESE FAR FROM HOME

> Patients may suffer in pain for months while waiting for their preferred doctor's availability, leading to prolonged discomfort, stress, and worsening conditions.

During my recent visit to the United States, I expected to stay for a longer time in Dallas, Texas. My daughter, Dr. Ojaswi Acharya, had advised me to get in touch with Dr. Binita and consult her if I faced any health-related issues. Although I did not have any specific health problems, I called her a few days after arriving. I had long wished to meet Dr. Binita, who felt like my own daughter, and to visit her home.

As soon as I called, she warmly responded and even arranged some necessary medicines for me as a precaution. In her professional capacity, she also provided guidance to a pharmacy for any potential needs. She suggested that I visit the clinic at the Nepali temple once and get a check-up from a senior doctor, assuring me that she would inform them in advance.

After completing her MBBS from Kathmandu Medical College, Binita Kharel moved to the United States. Along with pursuing further education and professional work, she has also been actively involved in social service. I was especially pleased to learn that she has been supporting projects in Nepal under the leadership of the renowned Dr. Bhagwan Koirala.

I had long heard that Nepalese living around Dallas had established the "Nepali Cultural and Spiritual Center" in Euless to preserve and promote language, education, culture, religion, and community bonding. Many friends, including Haribol Bhandari, Krishna Lamichhane, and Dhananjaya Dhakal, often spoke about it. Whenever I visited, I made it a point to go there. Through Binita, I came to know that a health center named "Himalaya Health Clinic" is also being operated there by Nepalese.

Senior doctors in the area volunteer their services on the clinic day. I visited the clinic. At Anwesh's insistence, even though I didn't really need it, I had a check-up with a senior physician. Raj Shrestha, along with Dibash Udash, Haris Neupane, and others who have been serving there for a long time, showed me around the clinic, its rooms, equipment, and introduced me to the doctors.

Raj explained that the clinic still lacks a laboratory and some essential equipment. Since it operates as a non-profit, charity-based organization, one of the labs provides up to a 40% discount on lab services for Nepalese patients referred by them. This is indeed a helpful facility.

Without a doubt, it is a valuable service

Healthcare in the United States is governed by complex rules and procedures. At the same time, it is home to some of the most advanced and innovative medical technologies in the world. High priority is given to research, medical equipment, and healthcare advancements. Many people share stories of diseases considered incurable elsewhere being successfully treated.

I personally know individuals who were once told their treatment was no longer possible and had lost hope, but after receiving treatment in the United States, they returned home fully recovered, almost as if reborn. These remarkable achievements in healthcare are often highlighted in the media. However, accessing these services is not always easy.

Unlike in Nepal, where medicines can often be purchased without a prescription, in the United States, it is impossible to obtain most medications without a doctor's prescription. Except for basic items like Vicks VapoRub, digestive aids, or oral rehydration solutions, pharmacies will not dispense medicines without proper authorization, no matter how serious the patient's condition or how much they request. Violations can lead to strict penalties and/or jail.

The U.S. government places great importance on the health of its citizens. Strict laws are in place to prevent the misuse of medication and to ensure that people do not harm themselves due to a lack of knowledge or negligence. Health insurance systems are also established to ensure that no one is deprived of treatment, and these rules are strictly enforced.

However, treatment is only covered within the limits of the insurance plan. If treatment exceeds those limits, the costs can be extremely high. For those without insurance, even basic medical care can be financially overwhelming. When converted into Nepali currency, the expenses can be shocking.

Getting appointments with well-known doctors is often difficult, and even for minor surgeries, long waiting periods are common. Patients may suffer in pain for months while waiting for their preferred doctor's availability, leading to prolonged discomfort, stress, and worsening conditions.

For people living in the U.S., this is a common reality, and they are mentally prepared for it. However, for those coming from Nepal and staying for extended periods, this situation can be quite stressful.

In recent years, not only students but also their

> The clinic does not pay salaries; all services are provided voluntarily. If a specialist for a particular condition is not available, patients are guided with proper advice, referrals, and information. According to Raj Shrestha, who has been involved in the management since the clinic's establishment, many Nepalese interested in medical service and social work have expressed a desire to join the initiative. Since the clinic operates on Sunday morning, it is convenient for many volunteers.

parents, elderly individuals, patients, and even those with limited education have been migrating to the U.S. Young students, in particular, must work extremely hard, often managing their time down to meet responsibilities. Even small support systems can be meaningful to them.

For such Nepalese, a free, community-run health clinic like this becomes a vital support system, almost like a guiding stick for the blind. The initiative in Dallas is truly inspiring. It would be wonderful if similar efforts were established in other cities with large Nepali populations.

At the Himalaya Health Clinic, experienced Nepalese doctors from various specialties provide free services. Some are retired senior specialists who previously worked in hospitals in Nepal, while others are graduates who completed their MBBS in Nepal and have pursued or are pursuing further studies in the U.S. The staff and volunteers are also well-educated.

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Dallas–Euless is considered a hub for Nepalese in the region. The clinic's location within the premises of the Pashupati-Buddha Temple, a center of faith and devotion for the community, adds to its appeal. Visiting the site offers both spiritual peace and physical care, nourishing both the soul and the body.

(Note : This article was translated into English by the editor.)

ABOUT THE WRITER

Engaged in the democratic movement since the age of 15. During the democratic movement, he was arrested several times and imprisoned in Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Sindhuli, Ramechhap, and Kathmandu's Central and Bhadragol jails under the Public Order Crimes and Security Act. He spent about 7 years in prison and 3 years in exile.

Active in journalism since 2037 BS. While publishing an interview with Yogi Narharinath as a journalist, he was imprisoned for 8 months on a political offense case during the Panchayat period. The registration of the newspaper was revoked. In 2048 BS, he was imprisoned for a week by the Supreme Court for printing a cartoon in connection with the Mahakali Accord. Pardon. Although it was decided that the punishment would be waived if he begged for forgiveness, he was sent to Bhadragol Jail after refusing to apologize. During the 2062/63 mass movement, he was arrested several times, faced a lathi-charge, tear gas, etc.

Continuously active and dedicated to strengthening nationalism through dialogue, democracy, freedom of the press and expression, and civil rights.

USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HEALTHCARE SAFELY
WHAT OUR COMMUNITIES SHOULD KNOW

Binita Kharel Nepal
MD

Artificial intelligence is becoming part of everyday healthcare, often without us realizing it. It helps doctors summarize visits, supports medical decision-making, and powers devices like smartwatches that track sleep, heart rate, and activity.

Many patients are already using AI to learn about their health. This can be helpful. But it also raises an important question:

Are we using these tools in a way that truly supports our health?

As a physician, I believe AI can be a powerful partner in healthcare. But it must be used with awareness, not blind trust.

What AI Can Do Well

AI can help:

- explain medical information in simple terms
- summarize complex topics
- identify patterns in wearable data
- help patients prepare for doctor visits

These tools can make patients more informed and engaged in their care.
But AI does not replace medical judgment.

A Simple but Important Truth

AI can sometimes provide answers that sound confident but are not fully accurate.

The goal is not to avoid AI.
The goal is to use it wisely.

Think of AI as a guide, not a decision-maker.

> AI can help identify patterns in this data and raise awareness about your health. But these tools provide signals, not diagnoses. They are most useful when combined with medical guidance.

Avoid Over-Reliance

AI is fast and convenient, which makes it easy to rely on. But healthcare decisions require careful evaluation.

If you have:

- new symptoms
- worsening conditions
- medication concerns
- ongoing health issues

AI should not replace a visit to your physician.

One simple rule: Use AI to ask better questions, not to make final decisions.

Protecting Your Privacy

Many AI tools ask for personal information. Not all platforms are designed with healthcare-level privacy protections.

Before sharing sensitive details, ask:

- Is this platform secure?
- Where is my data going?

Being cautious with your information is part of using AI responsibly.

Wearables and Personal Health

Wearable devices are becoming increasingly common. They can track:

- sleep patterns
- activity levels
- heart rate trends

AI can help identify patterns in this data and raise awareness about your health. But these tools provide signals, not diagnoses. They are most useful when combined with medical guidance.

Strengthening the Doctor–Patient Relationship

AI is changing how patients access information, but it should strengthen, not replace, the relationship between patients and physicians.

Patients can come more prepared and informed. Physicians can help interpret and guide decisions.

The best outcomes happen when both work together.

A Shared Responsibility

For AI to truly benefit our communities, we need:

- patient education
- physician guidance
- responsible use of technology

Healthcare is not just about tools. It is about trust.

Final Thought

Artificial intelligence is a powerful tool, but it works best when used thoughtfully.

Use it to learn.
Use it to prepare.
Use it to understand your health better.

But always partner with your physician when making medical decisions.

When used responsibly, AI can help build a more informed, healthier community.

Disclosure: This article was developed with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for drafting and organization. The content has been reviewed and validated by the author to ensure accuracy and clinical relevance.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Dr. Binita Kharel Nepal is a board-certified Internal Medicine physician practicing in Dallas, Texas, with a focus on patient-centered and value-based care. She is trained in artificial intelligence in healthcare and is passionate about improving community health through education and the responsible use of emerging technologies.

TNMA IS MORE THAN JUST MEDICINE

LOOKING THROUGH A RHETORICAL LENS

Aabha Shrestha
Student Volunteer

Since 2019, I have had the privilege of volunteering with the Texas Nepalese Medical Association through health camps and community outreach initiatives dedicated to serving underserved populations. What began as helping at health camps eventually evolved into volunteering at the Himalaya Health Clinic following its inception in 2023. Over the years, I have worked in reception, learned about the Practice Fusion EMR system, interacted with physicians and dentists, and witnessed firsthand the impact that culturally centered healthcare can have within immigrant communities. As a Biology major and Communication Studies minor at Southwestern University, my experiences have allowed me to see the clinic through a different lens: not simply as a medical space, but as a powerful site of communication, identity, trust, and community formation.

This past semester, I took a course called "Rhetorical Theory," which focused on how communication influences the way people think, connect, build trust, and understand the world around them. Rather than viewing rhetoric as simply persuasion or public speaking, the class emphasized how communication itself can influence belonging, emotion, and social connection. Before this course, I often found myself viewing healthcare primarily from a scientific and clinical perspective. I thought about diagnosis, treatment, and physical health outcomes. However, through the expansion of my Communication Studies coursework, I began to understand that communication itself shapes dynamics that are deeply rooted within TNMA as a whole.

> Studying biology has taught me the scientific foundations of healthcare, but studying communication has taught me that medicine is also deeply human.

One theory that transformed this view is Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm, which argues that humans are naturally storytellers and that people understand the world through shared narratives and lived experiences. Fisher suggests that persuasion and trust are not built solely through facts or expertise, but through stories that resonate with people's values, identities, and experiences.

This perspective became incredibly meaningful when I reflected on the work being done at the Himalaya Health Clinic. Many patients

who visit the clinic are immigrants or members of underserved communities who may face language barriers, financial limitations, or difficulty navigating the American healthcare system. While medical expertise is certainly essential, I have realized that trust often begins before treatment even occurs. Sometimes it begins with hearing one's native language spoken. Sometimes it begins with seeing a familiar face from the community. Sometimes it begins with simply feeling understood.

Working in reception has allowed me to observe these moments closely. Patients often enter the clinic nervous or uncertain, but their demeanor changes when they are greeted with cultural familiarity and kindness. Conversations between volunteers, physicians, dentists, and patients often extend beyond symptoms and appointments. People share stories about family, work, and life experiences. In many ways, the clinic functions not only as a healthcare facility but also as a community-centered environment built upon shared understanding. Through this lens, I began to see that healthcare itself is deeply rhetorical because communication shapes whether patients feel safe, respected, and cared for.

Another rhetorical framework that helped shape my understanding of the clinic is constitutive rhetoric. Constitutive rhetoric argues that communication does not simply persuade people; rather, it helps create collective identities and communities. Through shared language, values, and experiences, rhetoric calls people into a sense of belonging and constructs a collective "we." When I reflected on the mission and growth of the Himalaya Health Clinic, I realized that the clinic does exactly this for the Nepalese community in Texas.

The clinic represents much more than free healthcare services. It symbolizes unity, mutual support, and collective care within the Nepalese diaspora. Volunteers, physicians, dentists, interpreters, and patients all contribute to creating a space that reflects compassion and service. The transition from periodic health camps to a permanent clinic in 2023 reflects not only organizational growth but also the strengthening of a community identity centered around helping one another. In this way, the clinic becomes a living example of how communication and service can bring people together.

As someone who hopes to become a physician in the future, these experiences have profoundly shaped how I think about medicine. Studying biology has taught me the scientific foundations of healthcare, but studying communication has taught me that medicine is also deeply human. A physician's ability to listen, communicate clearly, and build trust can be just as important as clinical knowledge. Volunteering at the Himalaya Health Clinic has shown me that effective healthcare requires more than treatment plans and prescriptions. It requires empathy, cultural understanding, and meaningful human connection.

Looking through the lens of rhetorical theory has allowed me to appreciate the Himalaya Health Clinic in a much deeper way. What I once viewed simply as volunteer work, I now recognize as something far more significant: a space where communication fosters trust, stories create connection, and healthcare strengthens community identity. The clinic demonstrates that care extends beyond medicine alone. It exists in the conversations held at the reception desk, the reassurance provided to anxious patients, the dedication of volunteers, and the collective effort to ensure that underserved individuals feel seen and supported.

As both a student and volunteer, I am grateful to have witnessed the impact of this work firsthand. The experiences I have gained through the Texas Nepalese Medical Association and the Himalaya Health Clinic have not only influenced my academic

> Nepalese Medical Association and the Himalaya Health Clinic have not only influenced my academic interests but have also strengthened my commitment to compassionate, community-centered healthcare.

interests but have also strengthened my commitment to compassionate, community-centered healthcare. Perhaps the most meaningful thing about changing the lens through which we view healthcare is realizing that healing often begins long before treatment ever does.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Aabha Shrestha is a Biology major and Communication Studies minor at Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX, on the pre-medical track. She has been an active volunteer with the Texas Nepalese Medical Association since 2019 and with the Himalaya Health Clinic since its opening in 2023.

On campus, **Aabha** serves as a Teaching Assistant for Introductory Biology laboratories and works as an Admissions Ambassador, where she gives tours to prospective students and their families. She is also the Vice President of the Pre-Health Organization, and serves as Chapter President and National Philanthropy Chair for the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA), and is a member of the Student Foundation. In addition, she founded Project Pirate Mindset, an initiative dedicated to promoting mental health awareness on Southwestern's campus. She was awarded the "Student Leadership Award 2026" as a "Distinguished Sophomore".

Off campus, **Aabha** works as a Medical Assistant at an optometry clinic and volunteers at the Williamson County Children's Advocacy Center, as well as in the pathology department at St. David's Georgetown Hospital, where she also serves on the hospital's student committee.

She is the Founder and President of "Address Teen Stress", a youth-led nonprofit organization focused on raising awareness about teen mental health. Through this platform, she has reached over 20,000 individuals and interviewed teenagers, mental health professionals, and women in pageantry who advocate for mental health awareness, sharing their stories, experiences, and expertise.

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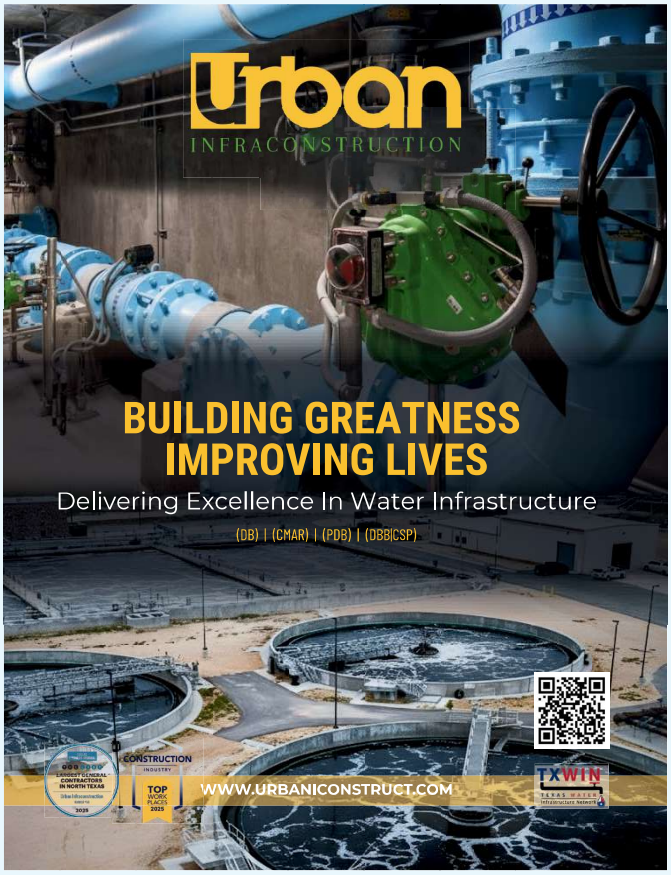

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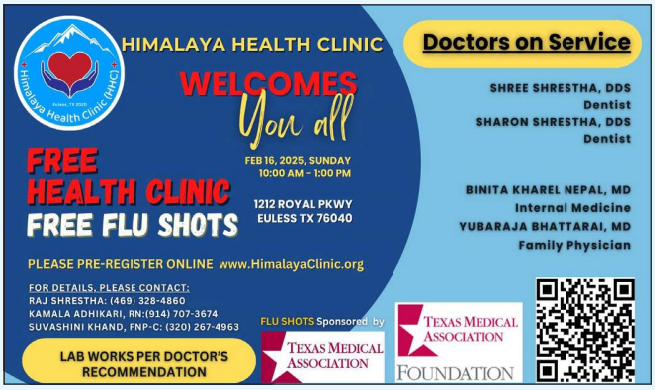
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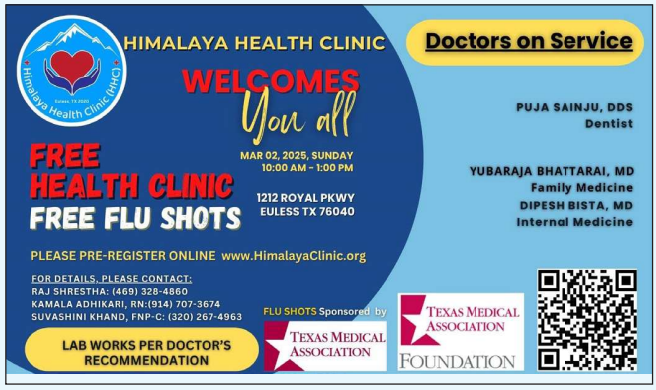
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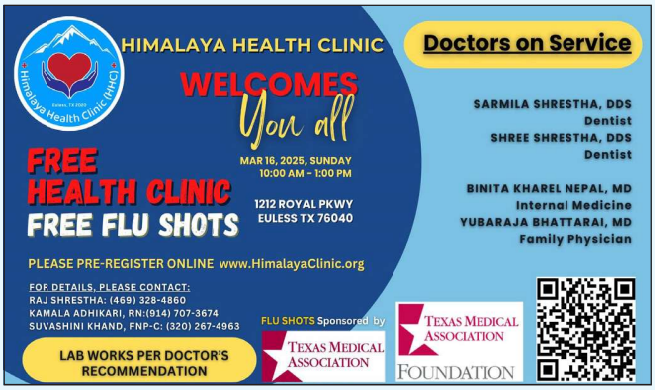
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Internal Medicine
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI, MD
Family Physician
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MADHU SHRESTHA, PhD, MS, MDS
Dentist
DIPESH BISTA, MD
Internal Medicine
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PUJA SAINJU, DDS
Dentist
BINITA KHAREL NEPAL, MD
Internal Medicine
DINESH MAINALI, MD
Internal Medicine
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Dentist
ANGELA MASTERS, DDS
Dentist
SANJEEB SHRESTHA, MD,FACG
Gastroenterologist
DINESH MAINALI, MD
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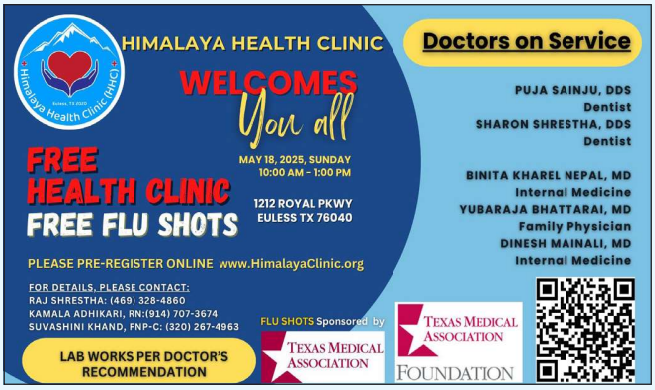
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MAY 18, 2025, SUNDAY
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
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EULESS TX 76040
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Dentist
SHARON SHRESTHA, DDS
Dentist
BINITA KHAREL NEPAL, MD
Internal Medicine
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI, MD
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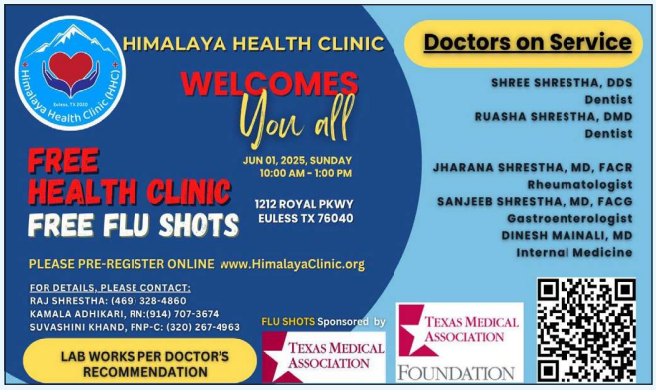
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JUN 01, 2025, SUNDAY
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SHREE SHRESTHA, DDS
Dentist
RUASHA SHRESTHA, DMD
Dentist
JHARANA SHRESTHA, MD, FACR
Rheumatologist
SANJEEB SHRESTHA, MD, FACG
Gastroenterologist
DINESH MAINALI, MD
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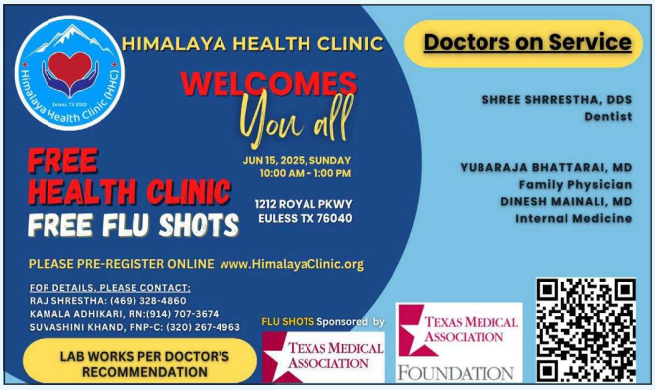
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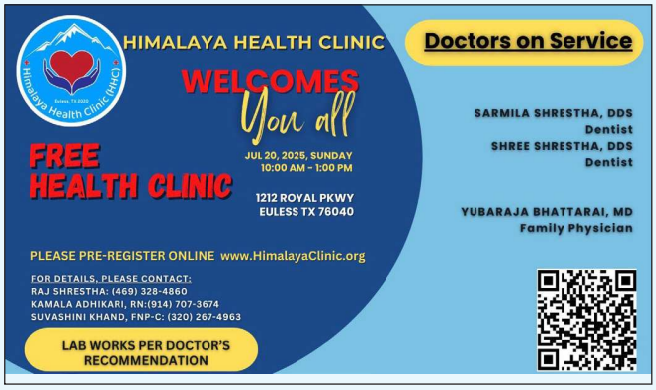
Family Physician
DINESH MAINALI, MD
Internal Medicine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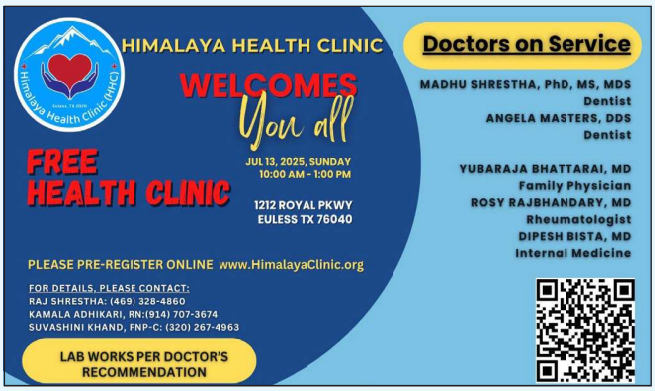
Dentist
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI, MD
Family Physician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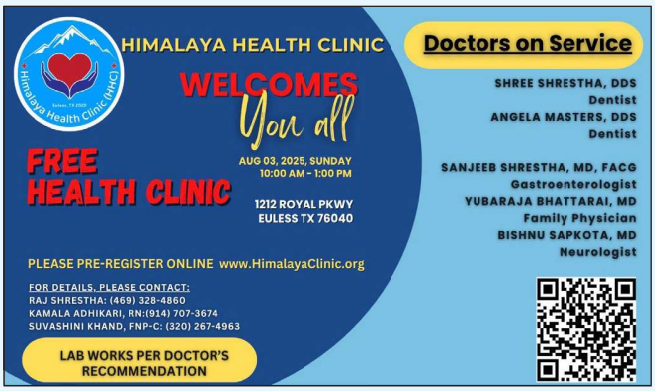
Rheumatologist
DIPESH BISTA, MD
Internal Medicine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Dentist
SANJEEB SHRESTHA, MD, FACG
Gastroenterologist
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI, MD
Family Physician
BISHNU SAPKOTA, MD
Neurologist

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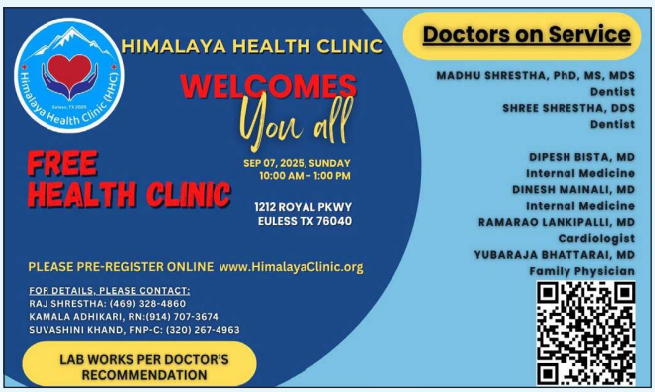
Family Physician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SHREE SHRESTHA, DDS
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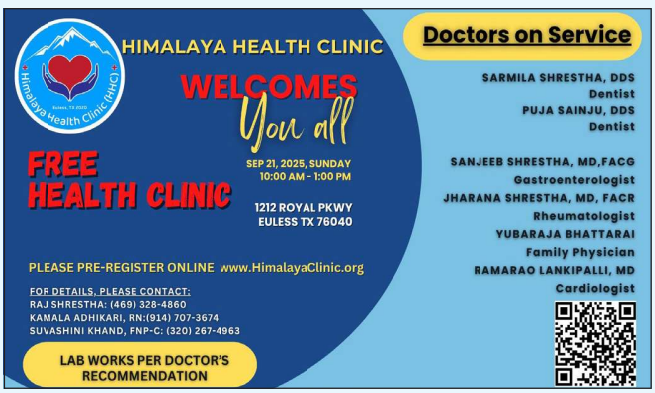
Internal Medicine
DINESH NAINALI, MD
Internal Medicine
RAMARAO LANKIPALLI, MD
Cardiologist
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI, MD
Family Physician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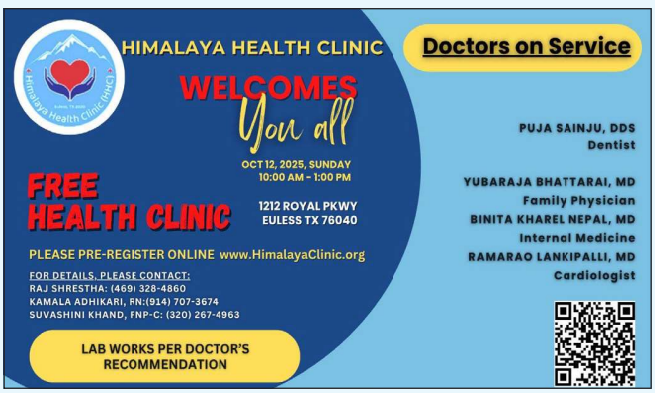
Gastroenterologist
JHARANA SHRESTHA, MD, FACR
Rheumatologist
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI
Family Physician
RAMARAO LANKIPALLI, MD
Cardiologist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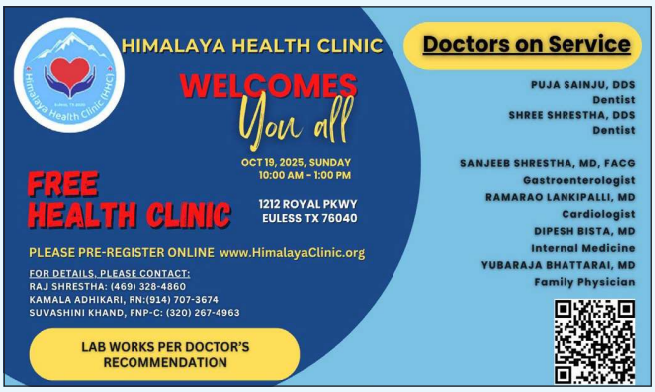
Family Physician
BINITA KHAREL NEPAL, MD
Internal Medicine
RAMARAO LANKIPALLI, MD
Cardiologist

Clinic Day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Cardiologist
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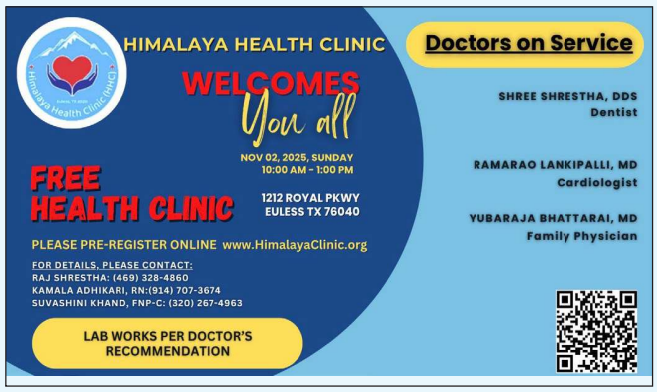
Family Physician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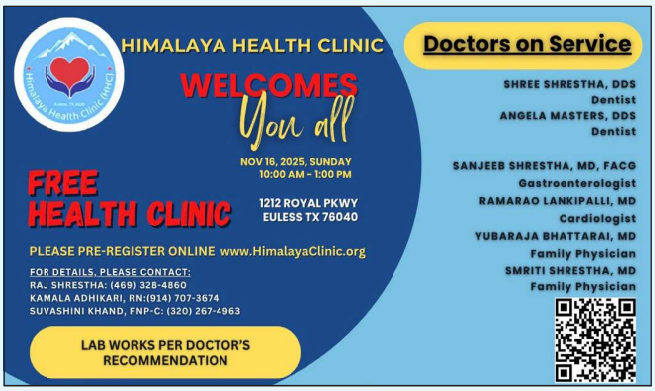
RAMARAO LANKIPALLI, MD
Cardiologist
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI, MD
Family Physician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Dentist
ANGELA MASTERS, DDS
Dentist
SANJEEB SHRESTHA, MD, FACG
Gastroenterologist
RAMARAO LANKIPALLI, MD
Cardiologist
YUBARAJA BHATTARAI, MD
Family Physician
SMRITI SHRESTHA, MD
Family Physician

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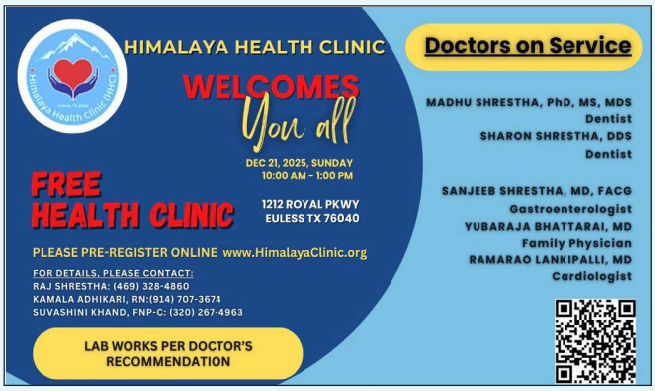
Dentist
ANGELA MASTERS, DDS
Dentist
ROSY RAJBHANDARY, MD
Rheumatologist
SMRITI SHRESTHA, MD
Family Physician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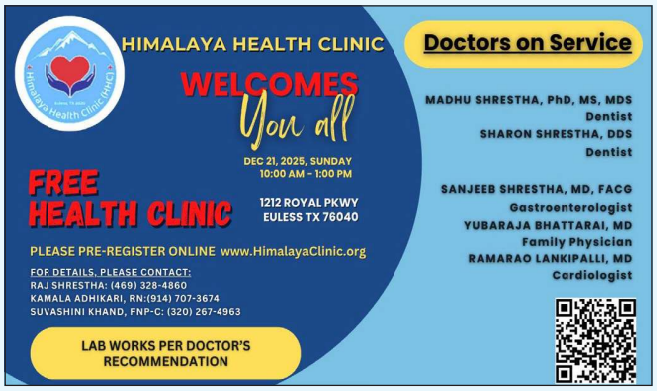
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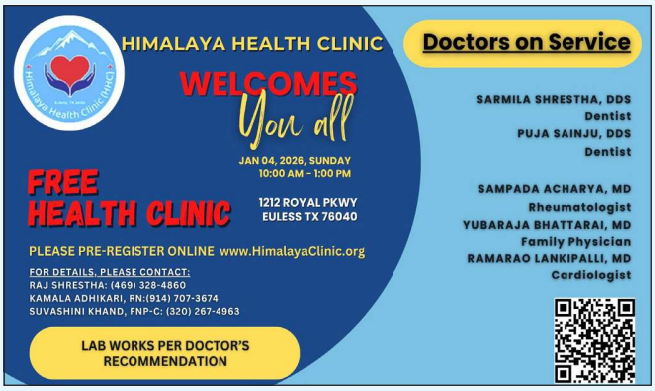
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Rheumatologist
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Clinic Day

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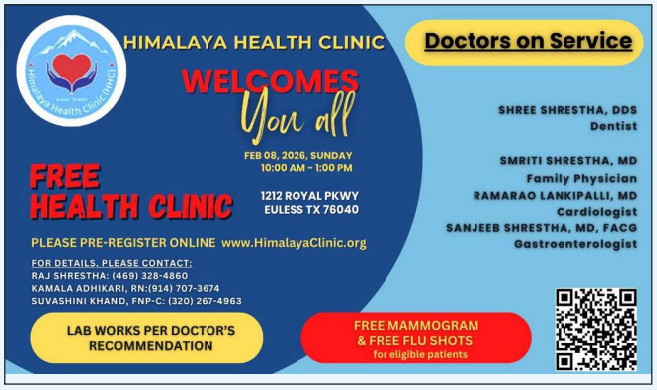
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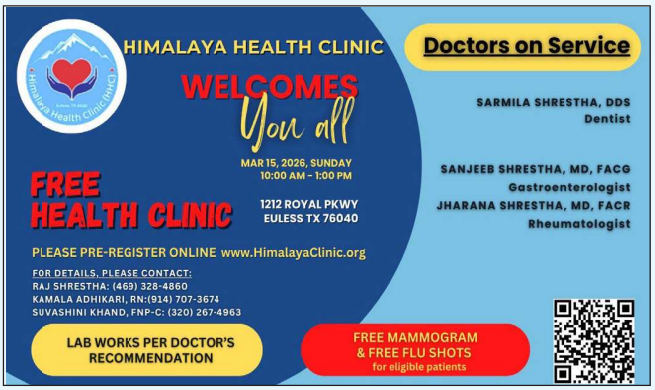
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Bigisha Yogi
Student Volunteer

TNMA EXPERIENCE

Before volunteering at Himalaya Health Clinic, I hadn't fully realized how much access to healthcare depends on factors like insurance, employment, geographic location, and language. Many uninsured individuals struggle to find a place where they can receive even basic medical attention. The Texas Nepalese Medical Association steps in through the Himalaya Health Clinic in Euless, Texas, which provides free dental and medical check-ups for uninsured individuals.

When I first started going to TNMA's Himalaya Health Clinic, I had limited knowledge about the barriers to healthcare access for many individuals in the community. As a volunteer, I assist with patient registration, appointment scheduling, and translating documents and procedures from English to Nepali. However, my role extends beyond these tasks. As someone who speaks Nepali, I am able to directly communicate with many elderly patients in their native language, helping them feel more comfortable.

I remember a few moments with elderly Nepali patients when they realized I could communicate with them in their native language, and a sense of ease on their faces became more noticeable. They share their gratitude, not only for the services provided by the clinic, but also for the ability to communicate in their mother tongue with the younger generation. These interactions are especially meaningful for me because I get the opportunity to connect in ways beyond basic assistance.

Through my experience with HHC, I have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals in my

> This journey has further strengthened her commitment to pursuing a career in medicine, where she hopes to make a lasting impact in her community.

> A deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals in my community, encouraging me to become more patient, compassionate, and aware of the impact small actions can have on others.

community, encouraging me to become more patient, compassionate, and aware of the impact small actions can have on others. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to learn more about the generations before me and appreciate my cultural identity.

In short, volunteering at the clinic has not only allowed me to support patients but has also motivated me to contribute to improving access to healthcare in the future.

She enjoys reading, traveling, and volunteering, and is actively involved in both school and community organizations, including Make-A-Wish, KPALS, Share the Smile, and Interact Counts, among others.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Bigisha Yogi is a junior at Birdville High School with an interest in pursuing a pre-med track and a long-term goal of becoming a physician. She enjoys reading, traveling, and volunteering, and is actively involved in both school and community organizations, including Make-A-Wish, KPALS, Share the Smile, and Interact Counts, among others.

She is especially passionate about TNMA's Himalaya Health Clinic because of the direct impact it has on her community and her generation. Through this experience, she has been inspired to continue exploring ways to help others, improve access to healthcare, and contribute to meaningful change. This journey has further strengthened her commitment to pursuing a career in medicine, where she hopes to make a lasting impact in her community.

Darshana Baral
Student Volunteer

MY SECOND FAMILY

Himalaya Health Clinic wasn't just an experience for me; it's a story, a chapter that is still being written. And I know it's the same for everyone who comes in as a patient or a volunteer. For me personally, the clinic has helped me develop strong leadership skills while building a lasting sense of community and meaningful connections that continue to shape who I am.

I remember my first day of volunteering. We were a small group preparing to see around 30 patients that day. I was assigned to manage patient flow in and out of the doctors' rooms on my own, a role that can quickly become hectic. At 9 AM on a Sunday, I was ready to do my job and go home for a nap. But then I met my first patient.

She looked around my grandma's age. The aama started a conversation with me, and I learned she was there because of tooth pain. However, her son was unable to accompany her. It broke me a little inside to see her navigating the appointment alone in a country where she didn't speak the language. In that moment, I realized how much comfort it must have brought her to be in an environment where people understood her.

By simply speaking in my mother tongue, I was able to help her feel calm and supported, while giving her hope that she would receive proper care. That is when I truly understood what it meant to be a volunteer. It wasn't just a job or a task to complete; it was about representing and reflecting the values that the Himalaya Health Clinic stands for. To me, volunteering is more than just a role; it's a commitment to leave an impact wherever I go, no matter how big or small the action may seem.

As the clinic became busier, the aama began talking with other patients who had started arriving, sharing stories about where they came from in Nepal and where their children now work. In that

> From the connections between doctors and high school students to lifelong friendships, it brings together people from different backgrounds and walks of life.

> Himalaya Health Clinic has truly built a new community. From the connections between doctors and high school students to lifelong friendships, it brings together people from different backgrounds and walks of life. Twice a month, individuals come together with a shared purpose: to serve those who are underserved in our community.

space, she found a connection. Before leaving, she smiled at me and thanked me, and I understood why. It wasn't just about the dental care; it was about being seen, heard, and supported.

Himalaya Health Clinic has truly built a new community. From the connections between doctors and high school students to lifelong friendships, it brings together people from different backgrounds and walks of life. Twice a month, individuals come together with a shared purpose: to serve those who are underserved in our community. Each clinic day brings new faces, new lessons, and new opportunities to grow.

Through this organization, I have met incredibly supportive people, including dentists and doctors I aspire to become like. The clinic has given me so much, and I hope to continue giving back in every way I can.

Volunteering at the clinic has been a privilege. It has allowed me to be part of meaningful change in our community, where everyone is allowed to access basic healthcare. It has also taught me the true meaning of selflessness. For many high school students, including myself, the clinic provides exposure to the healthcare system, the values it is built on, and the importance of empathy in patient care. Most importantly, it has shown me how powerful it is when people come together with a shared purpose.

TNMA represents more than just an organization; it is a reflection of resilience, compassion, and unity. It shows the dedication it takes to build and sustain something that serves so many. Being part of this effort has not only shaped my goals but has also strengthened my belief in the impact of community-driven care.

TNMA represents more than just an organization; it is a reflection of resilience, compassion, and unity. It shows the dedication it takes to build and sustain something that serves so many. Being part of this effort has not only shaped my goals but has also strengthened my belief in the impact of community-driven care.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Darshana Baral is a sophomore at Birdville High School. In her free time, she enjoys baking, cooking, and watching movies. She is deeply passionate about service and dedicates much of her time to nonprofit and volunteer work.

Darshana is the founder of Share the Smile, a youth-led nonprofit, and is also involved in several other organizations focused on health and business. Through her experience volunteering at the Himalaya Health Clinic, she has grown as a leader while gaining hands-on exposure to both nonprofit work and the healthcare field.

She is currently a member of the Texas A&M Future Dental Club and is interested in pursuing a career in dentistry. In the future, she hopes to combine her passion for dentistry and service by expanding access to free dental care globally and continuing to make a meaningful impact in her community.

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Suvashini Khand (Sabha) & Sandeep Jung Pandey

Sunil Shrestha & Sangita Bajracharya Shrestha

Bal Joshi:
Redefining Limits with a Guinness World Record

In a remarkable display of endurance, discipline, and determination, Bal Joshi has etched his name in history by completing the prestigious 777 World Marathon Challenge, running seven marathons on seven continents in seven consecutive days. With this extraordinary achievement, he has earned a Guinness World Record and brought immense pride to the Nepali and Nepalese American community.

What makes this accomplishment even more inspiring is not just the physical strength required but the mental resilience and unwavering commitment behind it. Covering 26.2 miles each day, across vastly different climates, time zones, and terrains, is a feat that very few in the world have attempted, let alone completed successfully.

Bal Joshi finished the challenge with a cumulative time of just over 34 hours and 50 minutes, crossing the final finish line in Miami. His journey has been widely recognized and featured on major media platforms, including NBC 5 and Fox 4, further highlighting the global significance of his achievement.

Beyond the record, Bal Joshi's journey represents something deeper. It is a story of perseverance, pushing boundaries, and believing in what is possible. His success serves as a powerful reminder that limits are often self-defined, and with discipline and purpose, they can be broken.

For the Nepalese community, his achievement is a source of inspiration, especially for the younger generation. It reinforces the value of hard work, resilience, and dreaming beyond conventional boundaries.

Bal Joshi's continued support for community initiatives, including TNMA and the Himalaya Health Clinic, reflects his commitment not just to personal excellence but also to giving back.

His journey is not just about running marathons; it is about inspiring a movement.

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